















# GUNNER DEPEW

BY

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Member of the Foreign Legion of France

Captain Gun Turret, French Battleship *Cassard*

Winner of the Croix de Guerre



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**To**  
**JAMES WATSON GERARD**

who was strong for the men  
in the German prison camps  
and was a real friend to me



## PREFACE

UNTIL I had been in Chicago for some time talking about my war experiences, I never had any idea of writing a book. It was about the last thing in the world I ever thought of doing. But people who heard me talk always wondered why I didn't. Then a chap, who had been "over there" and written about it, said: "Oh! You can do it!" So I began to take observations, as you might say.

One man said I had nothing to do but to write about all the places I had been to, everything I'd seen or heard, and everything that had happened to me. "Some" job, as I found out.

Well, anyhow, I've done it, and I found I remembered more things than I thought I could—some things I'd as lief forget. I'm not a writer, but I have done the best I could, and I hope you will like my book.

I want to thank all the people who have been so good to me since my return to America. Somehow, I never seem to know just how to do it when I see them.

A. N. D.





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# GUNNER DEPEW

## CHAPTER I

### IN THE AMERICAN NAVY

My father was a seaman, so, naturally, all my life I heard a great deal about ships and the sea. Even when I was a little boy, in Walston, Pennsylvania, I thought about them a whole lot and wanted to be a sailor—especially a sailor in the United States Navy.

You might say I was brought up in the water. As far back as I can remember, I was a good swimmer. When my mother and I were living in Walston and she wanted me for anything, she always sent down to the creek for me, because she knew if I was not at home, I would be swimming. Then, in Yonkers, there was a pier at the Yerks and Company docks which, with the lumber piled on it, was seventy-five feet above the Hudson, and I used to dive off it many times every day in the summer. This was when I was about eleven years old.

When I was twelve I went to sea as cabin boy on the whaler *Therifus*, out of Boston. She was an old square-rigged sailing ship, built more for work

than for speed. We were out four months on my first cruise, and were badly battered, especially in a storm on the Newfoundland Banks, where we lost our instruments, and had a hard time navigating the ship. I got knocked about, too, for there was a big whaler aboard, who used to beat me up almost every day. He thought I did not put on enough style in bringing the grub to the forecandle. I was not a very fancy waiter, I guess. Later, I often used to think of that big bruiser when I was in the navy and my fists were making a reputation for themselves. Whaling crews work on shares, and during the two years I was on the *Therifus* my shares amounted to fourteen hundred dollars (£280).

Then I shipped as first-class helmsman on the British tramp *Southerndown*, a twin-screw steamer, out of Liverpool. Many people are surprised that a fourteen-year old boy should be helmsman on an ocean-going craft, but all over the world you will see young lads doing their turn at the wheel. On a sailing ship like the *Therifus*, they have four men to the wheel; on a steamer, one; it is the steam steering-gear that makes the difference. I was on the *Southerndown* two years, and in that time visited most of the important ports of Europe—Spezia, Bilbao, Cadiz, Brest, Liverpool, Odessa, Archangel, Hamburg, Rotterdam. There is nothing like a tramp steamer if you want to see the world. The *Southerndown* is the vessel which, in the fall of

1917, sighted a German U-boat rigged up like a sailing ship.

Although I liked visiting the foreign ports, I got tired of the *Southerndown* after a while, and at the end of a voyage which landed me in New York, I decided to go into the United States Navy. After lying by for a week or two, I enlisted and was assigned to duty as a second-class fireman.

People have said they thought I was pretty small to be a fireman; they have the idea that firemen must be big men. Well, I am 5 feet 7½ inches in height, and when I was sixteen I was as tall as I am now and weighed 168 pounds. I was a whole lot heftier then, too, for that was before my introduction to "kultur" in German prison camps, and life there is not exactly fattening—not exactly. I do not know why it is, but if you will notice the navy firemen—the lads with the red stripes around their left shoulders—you will find that almost all of them are small men. But they are a hefty lot.

Now, in the navy, they always worry a new-comer until he shows that he can take care of himself, and I got my whack very soon after I went into Uncle Sam's service. I was washing my clothes in a bucket on the forecastle deck, and every garby (sailor) who came along used to give me or the bucket a kick, and spill one or both of us. Each time I moved to some other place, but I always seemed to be in somebody's way. Finally, I saw a

marine coming. I was nowhere near him, but he hauled out of his course to come up to me and gave the bucket a boot that sent it twenty feet away, at the same time handing me a clout on the ear that about knocked me down. Now, I did not exactly know what a marine was, and this fellow had so many stripes on his sleeves that I thought he must be some sort of officer, so I just stood by. There was a gold-stripe (that is, a commissioned officer) on the bridge and I knew that if anything was wrong, he would cut in, so I kept looking up at him, but he stayed where he was, seeing everything, and never saying a word. And all the time the marine kept slamming me about and telling me to "get the hell out of there."

Finally I said to myself, "I'll get this guy if it's the brig [cells] for a month." So I planted him one in the kidneys and another in the mouth, and he went clean up against the rail. But he came back at me strong, and we were at it for some time.

But when it was over the gold-stripe came down from the bridge and shook hands with me!

After this they did not tease me much, excepting the regular tricks, like tying a sleeping man's feet to his hammock, such as you have got to expect, which you pull off on the next man when his turn comes. This was the beginning of a certain reputation that I had in the navy for fist-work. Later I had a reputation for swimming, too. That first day they began

calling me "Chink," though I don't know why, and it has been my nickname in the navy ever since.

It is a curious thing, and I never could understand it, but garbies and marines never mix. The marines are good men and great fighters, aboard and ashore, but we garbies never have a word for them, nor they for us. On shore leave abroad, we pal up with foreign garbies even, but hardly ever with a marine. Of course, they are with us strong in case we have a scrap with a liberty party from some foreign ship—they cannot keep out of a fight any more than we can—but after it is over, they are on their way at once and we on ours. The only other navy that has a marine corps is the British, although the French have a Marine Infantry that garrisons ports, but does not serve aboard ships. The British call their men the Royal Marine Light Infantry, and a Limey garby told me it was the same way with them. They keep to themselves and the Limey garbies do the same. But he did not know why, either. He said it always had been that way in their navy, and I have heard it always has been with us.

There are lots of things like that in the navy that you cannot find out the reason for, and I think it is because sailors change their ways so little. They do a great many things in the navy because the navy always has done them. I never saw an old garby who wasn't always telling the young ones what things were like in his day and advising them to do

as he did. Of course, sailors have much changed since the days of the sailing ships, because their work is so different, and sailors change when ships change; but ships alter more than sailors. And I think it always will be that way.

A few sentences back I spoke of a British sailor as a "Limey." The old British ships used to carry large quantities of lime-juice, because they thought it was a cure for the scurvy. So, all over the world, British ships are called "Lime-juicers" and their sailors "Limeys." There is a saying in the merchant marine that the bucko (or tyrannical) mate of a Lime-juicer is the toughest guy in the world, but they do not think so in the navy.

I kept strictly on the job as a fireman, but I wanted to get into the gun turrets. It was slow work for a long time. I had to serve as second-class fireman for four months, first-class for eight months, and in the engine-room as water-tender for a year.

Then, after serving on the *Des Moines* as a gun-loader, I was transferred to the *Iowa*, and finally worked up to a gun-pointer. After a time I got my C. P. O. rating—chief petty officer, first-class gunner.

During my four years in the American navy I won three cups in swimming races. The first was in a Y.M.C.A. race from Battery Park, New York City, to the Statue of Liberty. I had to join the Y.M.C.A. to qualify for the race. I won my second



cup in London in a two-miles' race in the Thames, starting from Tilbury Docks. There were about seventy men in this race, which was held by the Lamport & Holt and the Atlantic Transport Lines. Then, at Brest, the French and American fleets held a race, and I won my third cup. I understand there were four hundred men in this race.

Somehow, there is always somebody for a sailor to fight in every port in the world, and I met my share of them. Just as some people know a place by its restaurants, or theatres, or art galleries, so sailors know a port by the fights they have had there, or perhaps some particular kind of food. There was a big porter in Constantinople that I always battled with, and a lighterman in Archangel. Genoa we liked because of the macaroni; we used to eat yards of it.

We got to be fond of goats' milk, too. In Italy, when you want any milk, they round up a herd of goats, and work out a quart or whatever quantity you want. So, while one of us bargained with the milkman and had him draw off a quart or so, the rest of us would chase the goats around the corner and get all the milk we wanted for nothing. They caught on to this in Spezia, though, and our ship had a bad name there. So, one time when we were in this port, we were refused shore leave, and they put a gendarme at the gangway. I tried to get past him, but he drove me back with his rifle. This made me

pretty sore, so when we were leaving, I shoved him in the neck with a long board from off the after deck. They tried to arrest me then, but the skipper told me to go forward and get my gear going and they wouldn't know who had done it. I hid in this way until we were clear of the port, but they cabled ahead of us and the authorities tried to take me off at Gibraltar. Our skipper saved me somehow, though I do not know exactly how. This is just a sample of the scrapes sailors get into.

The various navies differ in many ways, but most of the differences would not be noticed by anyone but a sailor. Every sailor has a great deal of respect for the Swedes and Norwegians and Danes; they are born sailors and are very daring, but, of course, their navies are small. The Germans were always known as clean sailors; that is, as in our navy and the British, their vessels were ship-shape all the time, and were run as sweet as a clock. Some of the navies of Southern Europe are not so notable in this respect. The British and German sailors are strong on tradition, and are considered superstitious. A man gets his ratings with them more for age and experience, while in our navy and in that of France skill counts for more than time in service.

There is no use comparing the various navies as to which is best; some are better at one thing and some at another. The British navy, of course, is the largest, and nobody will deny that at most things

they are topnotch—least of all themselves; they admit it. But there is one place where the navy of the United States has it all over every other navy on the seven seas, and that is gunnery. The American navy has the best gunners in the world. And do not let anybody tell you different.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WAR BREAKS

AFTER serving four years and three months in the United States Navy, I received an honourable discharge on April 14, 1914. I held the rank of chief petty officer, first-class gunner. It is not uncommon for garbies to go easy for a while between enlistments—they like a vacation as much as anyone—and it was my intention to loaf for a few months before joining the navy again.

After the war started, of course, I had heard more or less about the German atrocities in Belgium, and while I was greatly interested, I was doubtful at first as to the truth of the reports, for I knew how news gets changed in passing from mouth to mouth, and I never was much of one to believe things until I saw them, anyway. Another thing that caused me to be interested in the war was the fact that my mother was born in Alsace. Her maiden name, Diervieux, is well known in Alsace. I had often visited my grandmother in St. Nazaire and knew the country. So with France at war, it was not strange that I should be even more interested than many other garbies.

As I have said, I did not take much stock in the first reports of the Hun's exhibition of kultur, because Fritz is known as a clean sailor, and I felt certain that no real sailor would ever get mixed up in such dirty work as they said there was in Belgium. I supposed, too, that the soldiers were like the sailors. But I found out I was wrong about both.

One thing that opened my eyes a bit was the trouble my mother had in getting out of Hanover, where she was when the war started, and returning to France. She always wore a little American flag, and this both saved and endangered her. Without it, the Germans would have interned her as a Frenchwoman and, with it, she was sneered at and insulted time and again before she finally managed to get over the border. She died about two months after she reached St. Nazaire.

Moreover, I heard the fate of my older brother, who had made his home in France with my grandmother. He had gone to the front at the outbreak of the war with the infantry from St. Nazaire and had been killed two or three weeks afterwards. This made it a sort of personal matter.

But what put the finishing touches to me were the stories a wounded Canadian lieutenant told me some months later in New York. He had been there and he *knew*. You could not help believing him; you can always tell when a man has been there and *knows*.

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There was not much doing around New York, so I made up my mind all of a sudden to go over and get some excitement for myself. Believe me, I got enough business before I was through. Most of the really important things I have done have happened like that : I did them on the jump, you might say. Many other Americans wanted a look, too ; there were five thousand Americans in the Canadian Army at one time they say.

I would not claim that I went to Europe to save democracy, or anything like that. I never did like Germans, and I never met a Frenchman who was not kind to me, and what I heard about the way the Huns treated the Belgians made me sick. I used to get out of bed to go to an all-night picture show, I thought about it so much. But there was not much excitement around New York, and I inferred that the United States would not get into it for a while, anyway, so I just wanted to go over and see what it was like. That is why lots of us went, I think.

There were five of us who went to Boston to ship for the other side : Sam Murray, Ed Brown, Tim Flynn, Mitchell and myself. Murray was an ex-garby—two hitches (enlistments), gun-pointer rating, about thirty-five years old. Brown was a Pennsylvania man about twenty-six years old, who had served two enlistments in the United States Army and had quit with the rank of sergeant. Flynn and Mitchell were both ex-navy men. Mitchell was a

noted boxer. Of the five of us, I am the only one who went in, got through and came out. Flynn and Mitchell did not go in; Murray and Brown never came back.

The five of us shipped on the steamship *Virginian* of the American-Hawaiian Line, under American flag and registry, but chartered by the French Government. I signed on as water-tender—an engine-room job—but the others were on deck—that is, seamen.

We left Boston for St. Nazaire with a cargo of ammunition, bully beef, etc., and made the first trip without anything of interest happening, except that, while we were in the war zone, our boatswain was rigging the life-boats, when a line running between the davits parted and let him through into the sea. We were making about twelve knots at the time, but there was a strong current against us and a good sea running, and the boatswain shot past us like an arrow. We put about at once, but it took us three-quarters of an hour to get back to him, and more than that before we had a boat over the side and him into it. When we dragged him in, he did not have a stitch of clothing on him. He had undressed himself completely while he was in the water and kept himself up at the same time. Which I thought was doing pretty well, as there was a fairly high sea running.

Then, too, in my mess—the oilers' and water-

tenders'—the grub got pretty bad. One day they brought us a big mess-kid or tub full of what was supposed to be stew. It was the rottenest kind of garbage, really, and we made up our minds not to put up with it. In the navy we always complain if we have any real reason for a grievance, and so, when the other members of the mess showed they were not anxious to go to the front, it was up to me to make a bother about it and see if we could not get better food. So I took the tub and went up to the chart house to show it to the Old Man. I knocked at the door several times, but he did not answer, so I put the tub down on the deck right in front of the door and went away. A few minutes later he came out—right into the stew. His foot slipped and he lay down in the middle of it. His uniform and his dignity sustained severe injuries, as they say. Also, some more of him! Did he find out who did it? Well, I am here to-day. That's your answer.

As we were mooring to the dock at St. Nazaire, I saw a German prisoner sitting on a pile of lumber. I thought probably he would be hungry, so I went down into the oilers' mess and got two slices of bread with a thick piece of beef-steak between them and handed it to Fritz. He would not take it. At first I thought he was afraid to, but by using several languages and signs, he managed to make me understand that he was not hungry—had too much to eat, in fact.



I used to think of this fellow occasionally when I was in a German prison camp, and a piece of mouldy bread the size of a safety-match box was the generous portion of food they forced on me, with true German hospitality, once every forty-eight hours. I would not exactly have refused a beef-steak sandwich, I am afraid. But then I was not a heaven-born German. I was only a common American garby. He was full of kultur and grub. I was not full of anything.

There was a large prison camp at St. Nazaire, and at one time or another I saw all of it. Before the war it had been used as a barracks by the French army and consisted of well-made, comfortable two-storey stone buildings, floored with concrete, with auxiliary barracks of logs. The German prisoners occupied the stone buildings, while the French guards were quartered in the log houses. Inside, the houses were divided into long rooms with white-washed walls. There were two-decked wooden platforms in the rooms and iron cots, exactly the same as the French soldiers used. There were a gymnasium for the prisoners, a canteen where they might buy most of the things you could buy anywhere else in the country, and a studio for the painters among the prisoners. Officers were separated from privates—which was a good thing for the privates—and were kept in houses surrounded by stockades. Officers and privates received identical

treatment, however, and all were given exactly the same rations and equipment as the regular French army before it went to the front. Their food consisted of bread, soup, and "vino," as wine is called almost everywhere in the world. In the morning they received half a loaf of Vienna bread and coffee. At noon they each had a large dixie or can of thick soup, and at three in the afternoon more bread and a bottle of vino. The soup was more like a stew—very thick with meat and vegetables. At one of the officers' barracks there was a cook who had been chef in the largest hotel in Paris before the war.

All the prisoners were well clothed. Once a week, socks, underwear, soap, towels and blankets were issued to them, and every week the barracks and equipment were fumigated. They were given the best of medical attention.

Besides all this, they were allowed to work at their trades, if they had any. All the carpenters, cobblers, tailors and painters were kept busy, and some of them picked up more change there than they ever did in Germany, they told me. The musicians formed bands, and played almost every night at restaurants and theatres in the town. Those who had no trade were allowed to work on the roads, parks, docks, and at private residences.

Talk about Dear Old Jail! You could not have driven the average prisoner away from there with a 14-inch gun. I used to think about them in Bran-

denburg, when our boys were rushing the sentries in the hope of being bayoneted out of their misery.

One day I met an officer prisoner, who, like many of his kind, had not been grateful for the kindly treatment the French gave him, and had therefore been confined in a stockade. The cure for his stubbornness had evidently worked, for he pointed over to a hill, where there was the biggest pile of logs I ever saw, and said: "I would saw up all those logs if I could go over to that hill; it must be great to look down from the top of it. I've been staring at a fence for what seems years."

While our cargo was being unloaded I spent most of my time with my grandmother. I had heard still more about the cruelty of the Huns, and made up my mind to get into the service. Murray and Brown had already enlisted in the Foreign Legion, Brown being assigned to the infantry and Murray to the French man-of-war *Cassard*. But when I spoke of my intention, my grandmother cried so much that I promised her I would not enlist—that time, anyway—and made the return voyage on the *Virginian*. We were no sooner loaded in Boston than back to St. Nazaire we went.

## CHAPTER III

### IN THE FOREIGN LEGION

THIS time I was determined to enlist. So, when we landed at St. Nazaire, I drew my pay from the *Virginian*, and after spending a week with my grandmother, I went out and asked the first gendarme I met where the enlistment station was. I had to argue with him some time before he would even direct me to it. Of course, I had no passport, and this made him suspicious of me, but it did not seem at all like the welcome the Canadian lieutenant had assured me I would receive. However, I finally got the gendarme to take me to the enlistment station by showing him that if there was any objection coming, the recruiting officers were the ones to make it. I could have found the way by myself, I suppose, but once I had started arguing with the gendarme I hated to give in.

The officer in charge of the station was no warmer in his welcome than the gendarme, and this surprised me, because Murray and Brown had no trouble at all in joining. The French, of course, often speak of the Foreign Legion as "the convicts," because so many of the legionaries are

wanted by the police of their respective countries, not necessarily for criminal acts, though a criminal record never had been a bar to service with the Legion, and I did not see why it should be now—if they suspected me of having one. I had heard there were not a few Germans in the Legion—later I became acquainted with some—and, believe me, no Alsatian ever fought harder against the Huns than those former Deutschlanders did. It occurred to me then that if they thought I was a German, because I had no passport, I might have to prove I had been in trouble with the Kaiser's crew before they would accept me. I do not know what the real difficulty was, but I solved the problem by showing them my discharge papers from the American Navy. Even then, they were suspicious because they thought I was too young to have been a C.P.O. When they challenged me on this point, I said I would prove it to them by taking an examination.

They examined me very carefully, in English, although I know enough French to pass in a subject like gunnery. But foreign officers are very proud of their knowledge of English—and most of them can speak it—and I think this one wanted to show off, as you might say. Anyway, I passed my examination without any trouble, was accepted for service in the Foreign Legion, and received my commission as gunner, dated Friday, January 1, 1915.

There is no use in my describing the Foreign

Legion. It is one of the most famous fighting organisations in the world, and has made a wonderful record during the war. When I joined the Legion, it numbered about 60,000 men. The legionaries were a fine body of men, and wonderful fighters. But the whole civilised world is now fighting the Huns, and Americans do not have to enlist with the French or the Limeys any longer.

While I was in the Legion I heard of one chap who wrote long and exciting yarns of his life in the trenches—raids, bombardments, etc.—and all the while he was in a training camp far back from the lines out of sound of the guns. Some of his letters got past the censor somehow, but others were held up, and, believe me, this lad had it laid on to him thick and fast. He is dead now, or missing, I never heard exactly which, and anyway, he was just a kid, so nobody holds it against him.

But one thing about the Legion, that I find many people do not know, is that the legionaries are used for either land or sea service. They are sent wherever they can be used. I do not know whether this was the case before the present war—I think not—but in my time, many of the men were put on ships. Most people, however, have the idea that they are only used in the infantry.

With my commission as gunner, I received orders to go to Brest and join the dreadnought *Cassard*. This assignment tickled me, for my pal Murray was

aboard, and I had expected trouble in transferring to his ship in case I was assigned elsewhere. We had arranged to stick together as long as we could. We did, too.

Murray was as glad as I was when I came aboard, and he told me he had heard that Brown, our other pal, had been made a sergeant in another regiment of the Legion.

We were both surprised at some of the differences between the French navy and ours, but after we got used to them, we thought many of their customs improvements upon ours. But we could not get used to them at first. For instance, on an American ship, when you are sound asleep in a nice warm hammock and it is time to relieve the watch on deck, as like as not you will be awakened gently by a burly garby armed with a fairy wand about the size of a bed slat, whereas in French ships, when they call the watch, you would think you were in a swell hotel and had left word at the desk. It was hard to turn out at first without the aid of a club, and harder still to break ourselves of the habit of calling our relief in the gay and festive American manner; but, as I say, we got to like it after a while.

Then, too, they do not play any pranks in the French navy, and this surprised us. We had expected to go through the mill just as we did when we joined the American service, but nobody slung a hand at us. On the contrary, every garby aboard was kind and

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decent and extremely curious, and the fact that we were from the States counted a lot with them. They used to brag about it to the crews of other ships that were not so honoured.

But this kindness we might have expected. It is just like Frenchmen in any walk of life. With hardly an exception, I have never met one of this nationality who was not anxious to help you in every way he could; extremely generous, though not reckless with small change, and almost always cheery and with a smile in any weather. A fellow asked me once why it was that almost the whole world loves the French, and I told him it was because the French love almost the whole world and show it. And I think that is the reason, too.

About the only way you can describe the poilus, on land or sea, is that they are gentle. That is, you always think that word when you see one and talk to him—unless you happen to see him within bayonet distance of Fritz.

The French sailors sleep between decks in bunks, instead of hammocks, and as I had not slept in a bunk since my *Southerndown* days, it was pretty hard on me. So I got hold of some heaving line, which is one-quarter inch rope, and rigged up a hammock. In my spare time I taught the others how to make them, and pretty soon everybody was doing it. By the way, the American rag-time about "Everybody's Doing It" had just reached the French navy, and



everybody was overdoing it, each with a different version.

When I taught the sailors to make hammocks, I expected, of course, that they would use them as we did—that is, sleep *in* them. They were greatly pleased at first, but after they had tried the stunt of getting in and staying in, it was another story. A hammock is like some other things—it works while you sleep—and if you are not up to it, you spend most of your sleeping time hitting the floor. Our gun captain thought I had given him a trick hammock, but I did not need to; every hammock is a trick hammock.

They would not believe me, however, and they couldn't say enough things about me, and called me all the names in the French language, even "camel," which is supposed to be a very rough word and a terrible insult. I passed them a little language, too, in American, only I did not call them camels. No American garby would call a mate *that*!

Also, I taught them the way we make mats out of rope, to use while sleeping on the steel gratings near the entrance to stoke holes. In cold weather this part of the ship is more comfortable than the ordinary sleeping quarters, but without a mat it gets too hot.

American soldiers and sailors get the best food in the world, but while the French navy grub was not fancy, it was clean and hearty, as they say down East. For breakfast we had bread and coffee and

sardines; at noon a boiled dinner, mostly beans, which were old friends of mine, and of the well-named navy variety; at four in the afternoon, a pint of vino, and at six, a supper of soup, coffee, bread and beans.

Although the French “Seventy-five” is the best gun in the world, their naval guns are not as good as ours, and their gunners are mostly older men. But they will give a youngster a gun rating if he shows the stuff.

Shortly after I went aboard the *Cassard*, we received instructions to proceed to Spezia, the large Italian naval base. The voyage was without incident, but when we dropped anchor in Spezia, the port officials quarantined us for fourteen days on account of smallpox. During this period our food was pretty bad; in fact, the meat became rotten. This could hardly have happened on an American ship, because they are provisioned with canned stuff and preserved meats, but the French ships, like the Italian, depend on live stock, fresh vegetables, etc., which they carry on board, and we had expected to get a large supply of such stuff at Spezia. Long before the fourteen days were up we were out of these things, and had to live on anything we could get hold of—mostly hard-tack, coffee and cocoa.

I knew Spezia well, but I did not go about the town after the quarantine was lifted, because of the adventure I had had with the gendarme on another

voyage. I saw a gendarme, whom I took to be my friend, at a distance, but I did not haul any closer to make sure. I was glad he was still living, but I imagined he would not want to get chummy with me, so I thought I would not bother him.

We loaded a cargo of aeroplanes for the Italian aviators at the French flying schools, and started back to Brest. On the way we had target practice. In fact, at most times on the open sea, it was a regular part of the routine.

It was during one of these practices that the French officers wanted to find out what the Yankee gunner knew about gunnery. At a range of eight miles, while the ship was making eight knots an hour, with a fourteen-inch gun I scored three d's—that is, three direct hits out of five trials. After that there was no question about it. As a result, I was awarded three bars. These bars, which are strips of red braid, are worn on the left sleeve, and signify extra marksmanship. I also received two hundred and fifty francs, or about fifty dollars in American money, and fourteen days' shore leave.

All this made me *very* angry, oh, very much wrought up indeed, what do you think? I saw a merry life for myself on the French rolling wave if they felt that way about gunnery.

I spent most of my leave with my grandmother in St. Nazaire, except for a short trip I made to a star-shell factory. This factory was just about like

one I saw later somewhere in America, save in the French works all the hands were women. Only the guards were men, and they were *blessés* (wounded).

When my leave was up and I said good-bye to my grandmother, she managed a smile for me, though I could see that it was pretty stiff work. And without getting soft, or anything like that, I can tell you that smile stayed with me and it did me more good than you would believe, because it gave me something good to think about when I was up against the real thing.

I hope many women will read this book, because I have had it in mind for some time to tell all the women I could a little thing they can do that will help a lot. I am not trying to be fanciful about it, and I hope you will take it from me the way I mean it.

When you say good-bye to your son, or your husband, or your sweetheart, work up a smile for him. What you want to do is to give him something he can think about over there, and something he will like to think about. There is so much dirt, and blood, and hunger, and cold, and all that around him, that he has just got to quit thinking about it, or he will go crazy. And so, when he can think about something nice, he can pretty nearly forget all the rest for a while. The nicest things he can think about are the things he liked when he was at home.

Now, you can take it from me that what your boy will like to remember the best of all is your face *with a smile on it*. He has got enough hell on his hands without a lot of tears to remember. But don't forget that the chances are on his side—that he will get back to you ; the figures prove it. That will help you a lot. Even so, it will be hard work ; you will feel more like crying, and so will he, maybe. But smile for him. That smile is your “ bit.”

I will back a smile against the weeps in a race to Berlin any time. So I am telling you, and I cannot make it strong enough—*send him away with a smile*.

## CHAPTER IV

### IN THE FIRING LINE

WHEN I reported on the *Cassard* after my fourteen days' leave, I was detailed with a detachment of the Legion to go to the Flanders front. I changed into the regular uniform of the Legion, which is about like that of the infantry, with the regimental badge—a seven-flamed grenade.

We travelled from Brest by rail, in third-class cars, passing through Le Havre and St. Pol, and finally arriving at Bergues. From Bergues we made the trip to Dixmude by truck—a distance of about twenty miles. We carried no rations with us, but at certain places along the line the train stopped, and we got out to eat our meals. At every railway station they have booths or counters, and French girls work day and night feeding the poilus. It was a wonderful sight to see these girls, and it made you feel good to think you were going to fight for them.

It was not only what they did, but the way they did it, and it is at things like this that the French beat the world. They could tell just what kind of treatment each poilu needed, and they saw to it that he got it. They took special pains with the men of

the Legion, because, as they say, we are "strangers," and that means, "the best we have is yours" to the French. These French women, young and old, could be a mother and a sweetheart and a sister all at the same time to any hairy old ex-convict in the Legion, and do it in a way that made him feel like a little boy at the time and a rich church member afterwards. The only thing we did not like about the trip was that there were not enough stations along that line. This is a tip the French engineers will not take, I am afraid.

And the legionaries were French enough in their feelings so that they took it in the right way, too. I never saw one of our men get gay with a French girl, and if *they* did not, I know the regular French troops did not either. As soldiers are apt to be pretty raw sometimes, that is saying a lot for the French women.

There is another thing about the French women that I have noticed, and that is this. There are pretty girls in every country under the sun, but the plain girls in France are prettier than the plain ones in other countries. They might not show it in photographs, but in action there is something about them that you cannot explain. I have never seen an ugly French girl who was not easy to look at.

Most of the French people are just a little bit afraid of the men of the Legion. They think that a man must be a very desperate thug before he would

be willing to serve where the Legion does in time of peace and for the small pay they get. Also, after the Germans took Alsace-Lorraine in 1870, so many Alsatians joined the Legion—because otherwise they would have to serve with the Germans—that the French got into the habit of calling the legionaries Germans or Prussians, or something like that, and many of the simple-minded French people got to think they really were all Germans in the Legion.

So, when a section of the Legion came through a certain little town a short time before we did, the inhabitants were much frightened. They had never seen legionaries before, but they had heard of them.

“It is the Germans, the desperate men of the Legion,” they said. “What will become of the town?”

The men got out of the trains and wandered about the little town, and some of them wanted to buy tobacco, or vino, or what not. But every shop was closed and barricaded. Every person they came to ran away as fast as he or she could, and nobody would have a thing to do with them.

This made the men pretty mad, naturally. A great many soldiers or sailors would have broken up the whole place, but the men of the Legion knew discipline, for they really are proud of the regiment and do not want to disgrace it. So though these men were angry and insulted, they behaved themselves.



They really did need tobacco and a few other things, so they took the shutters out of a shop window and climbed in and helped themselves. But they left the money for it, and because they did not have the exact change, they left more than the right price. Then they got aboard their train and pulled away.

But the people of the place kept talking about the affair until, according to them, the Legion had sacked the town and looted every house in it. I guess they got to believing it themselves, because by the time we arrived, to say that they steered clear of us for life was putting it mildly.

They did not have the shops closed this time, and they were not hiding, but they would not have anything to do with us. They would sell us what we wanted to buy, but that was all, and not a single cheer-oh when some of us wanted to buy vino for the crowd.

We were used to this kind of thing—at least the old legionaries were—because trippers like the boys of the Legion never do get very chummy with the home guards. But we wanted the Legion to stand well with the folk in this town, and we were disappointed when the merry villagers froze up the way they did.

The worst of it was we had to stop there for three hours. We walked up and down the square as if we felt at home and just the correct thing—like wearing a yachting suit in the mountains!

We finally got to Dixmude, after having spent about eighteen hours on the way. On our arrival, one company was sent to the reserve trenches, and my company went to the front-line trench. We were not placed in training camps, because most of us had been under fire before. I never had, but that was not supposed to make any difference. They say if you can stand the Legion, you can stand anything. But I have seen worse than that.

Before we entered the communication trench, we were drawn up alongside of a cross-road for a rest, and to receive certain accoutrements. Pretty soon we saw a bunch of Boches coming along the road, without their guns, a few of them being slightly wounded. Some looked scared and others happy, but they all seemed tired. Then we heard some singing, and pretty soon we could see an Irish corporal stepping along behind the Huns, with his rifle slung over his back, and every now and then he would shuffle a bit and then sing some more. He had a grin on him that pushed his ears back, as if he enjoyed his job.

After we were rested, rifles, shrapnel helmets and belts were issued, and then we started down the communication trench. These trenches are entrances to the fighting trenches, and run at varying angles and varying distances apart. They are seldom wide enough to hold more than one man, so you have to march single file in them. They wind in and out,

according to the lie of the land, some parts of them being more dangerous than others. When you come to a dangerous spot, you have to crawl sometimes.

There are so many cross trenches and blind alleys that you need a guide for a long time, because without one you are apt to walk through an embrasure in a fire trench and right out into the open, between the German front line and your own. Which is hardly worth while!

If any part of the line is under fire, the guide at the head of the line is on the lookout for shells, and when he hears one coming, he gives the signal and you drop to the ground and wait until it bursts. You never get all the time you want, but even so, you have plenty of time to think about things while you are lying with your face in the mud, waiting to hear the sound of the explosion. When you hear it, you know you have got at least one more to dodge. If you do not hear it—well, most likely you are worrying more about tuning your thousand-string harp than anything else.

In the communication trench you have to keep your distance from the man ahead of you. This is done so that you will have plenty of room to fall down in, and because if a shell should find the trench, there would be fewer casualties in an open formation than in a close one. The German artillery is keen on communication trenches, and whenever they spot one, they stay with it a long time. Most of them

are camouflaged along the top and sides, so that enemy aviators cannot see anything but the earth or bushes when they throw an eye down on our lines.

We took over our section of the front line trenches from a French line regiment that had been on the job for twenty-four days. That was the longest time I have heard of any troops remaining in the firing line.

Conditions at the front and ways of fighting are changing all the time, as each side invents new methods of butchering, so when I try to describe the Dixmude trenches, you must realise that it may be ancient history by now. If they are still using trenches there, they probably look entirely different.

But when I was at Dixmude they were something like this :

Behind the series of front-line trenches are the reserve trenches; in this case, five to seven miles away, and still farther back are the billets. These may be houses, or barns, or ruined churches—any place that can possibly be used for quartering troops when off duty.

Troops were usually in the front-line trenches six to eight days, and fourteen to sixteen days in the reserve trenches. Then they were sent back to the billets for six or eight days.

We were not allowed to change our clothing in the front-line trenches—not even to remove socks, unless for inspection. Nor would they let you as

much as unbutton your shirt, unless there was an inspection of identification discs. We wore a disc at the wrist and another round the neck. You know the gag about the discs, of course: If your arm is blown off, they can tell who you are by the neck disc; if your head is blown off, they do not care who you are.

In the reserve trenches, you can make yourself more comfortable, but you cannot go to such extreme lengths of luxury as changing your clothes entirely. That is for billets, where you spend most of your time bathing, changing clothes, sleeping and eating. Believe me, billets is great stuff: it is like a sort of temporary heaven.

Of course you know what the word "cooties" means. Let us hope you will never know what the cooties themselves mean. When you get in or near the trenches, you take a course in the natural history of bugs, lice, rats and every kind of pest that has ever been invented.

It is funny to see some of the newcomers when they first discover a cootie on them. Some of them cry. If they really knew what it was going to be like they would do worse than that, maybe. Then they start hunting all over each other, just like monkeys. They team up for this purpose, and many times it is in this way that a couple of men get to be trench partners, and come to be pals for life—which may not be a long time at that.

In the front-line trenches it is more comfortable to fall asleep on the parapet fire-step than in the dug-outs, because the cooties are thicker down below, and they simply will not give you a minute's rest. They certainly are active little pests. We used to make back-scratchers out of certain weapons that had flexible handles, but never had time to use them when we needed them most.

We were given bottles of strong liquid which smelled like lysol, and were supposed to soak our clothes in it. It was thought that the cooties would object to the smell and quit work. Well, a cootie that could stand our clothes without the liquid on them would not be bothered by a little thing like this stuff. Also, our clothes got so sour and horrible-smelling that they hurt our noses worse than the cooties. They certainly were game little devils, and came right back at us.

So most of the poilus threw the stuff at Fritz, and fought the cooties hand to hand.

There was plenty of food in the trenches most of the time, though once in a while, during a heavy bombardment, the fatigue—usually a corporal's guard—would get killed in the communication trenches, and we would not have time to get out to the fatigue and rescue the grub they were bringing. Sometimes you could not find either the fatigue or the grub when you got to the point where they had been hit.

But as I say, we were well fed most of the time, and got second and third helpings until we had to open our belts. But as the Limeys say: "Blime, the chuck was rough." They served a thick soup of meat and vegetables in bowls the size of wash basins, black coffee, with or without sugar—mostly without!—and plenty of bread.

Also, we had preserves in tins, just like the Limeys. If you send any parcels over, do not put any apple and plum jam in them, or the man who gets it will let Fritz shoot him. Ask any Limey soldier, and he will tell you the same. I never thought there was so much jam in the world. No Man's Land looked like a city dump. Most of us took it, after a while, just to get the bread. Early in the war they used the tins to make bombs of, but that was before Mills came along with his hand grenade. Later they flattened out the tins and lined the dugouts with them.

Each man carried an emergency ration in his bag. This consisted of bully beef, biscuits, etc. This ration was never used except in a real emergency, because no one could tell when it might mean the difference between life and death to him. When daylight catches a man in a shell-hole, or at a listening post out in No Man's Land, he does not dare to crawl back to his trench before nightfall, and then is the time that his emergency ration comes in handy. Also, the stores failed to reach us some-

times, as I have said, and we had to use the emergency rations.

Occasionally we received raw meat, and fried it in our dugouts. We built regular clay ovens in the dugouts, with iron tops for broiling. This, of course, was in the front-line trenches only.

We worked two hours on the fire-step and knocked off for four hours, in which time we cooked and ate and slept. This routine was kept up night and day, seven days a week. Sometimes the programme was changed; for instance, when there was to be an attack, or when Fritz tried to come over and visit us, but otherwise nothing disturbed our routine unless it was a gas attack.

The ambition of most privates is to become a sniper, as the official sharpshooter is called. After a private has been in the trenches for six months or a year and has shown his marksmanship, he becomes the great man he has dreamed about. We had two snipers to each company, and because they took more chances with their lives than the ordinary privates, they were allowed more privileges. When it was at all possible, our snipers were allowed dry quarters, the best of food, and they did not have to follow the usual routine, but came and went as they pleased.

Our snipers, as a rule, went over the parapet about dusk, just before Fritz got his star shells going. They would crawl out to shell craters, or tree stumps, or holes that they had spotted during the day—in



other words, places where they could see the enemy parapets, but could not be seen themselves. Once in position, they would make themselves comfortable, smear their tin hats with dirt, get a good rest for their rifles and snipe every German they saw. They wore extra bandoliers of cartridges, since there was no telling how many rounds they might fire during the night. Sometimes they had direct and visible targets, and other times they potted Huns by guesswork. Usually they crawled back just before daylight, but now and again they were out twenty-four hours at a stretch. They took great pride in the number of Germans they knocked over, and if our men did not get eight or ten, they thought they had not done a good night's work. Of course, it was not wholesale killing, like machine-gunning, but it was very useful, because our snipers were always going for the German snipers, and when they got Sniper Fritz, they saved just so many of our lives.

The Limeys have a great little expression that means a lot: "Carry on." They say it is a Cockney expression. When a captain falls in action, his words are not a message to the girl he left behind him, or any sentiment about his grey-haired mother, but simply "Carry on, Lieutenant Whosis." If the lieutenant gets hit, it is "Carry on, Sergeant Jacks," and so on as far as it goes. So the words used to mean, "Take over the command, and do the job right." But now they mean not only that, but

“Keep up your courage, and go to it.” One man will say it to another, sometimes, when he thinks the first man is getting down-hearted; but more often, if he is a Limey, he will start kidding him.

Our men, of course, did not say “Carry on,” and in fact, they did not have any expression in French that meant exactly the same thing. But they used to cheer each other on all right, and they passed along the command when it was necessary, too. I wonder what expression the American troops will use. (You notice I do not call them Sammies!)

I took my turn at listening-post with the rest of them, of course. A listening-post is any good position out in No Man’s Land, and is always held by two men. Their job is to keep a live ear on Fritz, and in case they hear anything that sounds very much like an attack, one man runs back to his lines, and the other stays to hold back the Boches as long as he can. You can judge for yourself which is the more healthy job.

Many as were the times that I went on listening-post duty, I never did get to feeling homelike there, exactly. You have to lie very still, of course, as Fritz is listening, too, and a move may mean a bullet in the ribs. So, lying on the ground with hardly a change of position, the whole lower part of my body would go to sleep before I had been at the post very long. I used to brag a lot about how fast I could run, so I had my turn as the runner, which suited me all right.

But every time I got to a listening-post and started to think about what I would do if Fritz should come over, and wondered how good a runner *he* was, I took a long breath and said, "Feet, do your duty." And I was strong on duty.

After I had done my stunt in the front-line and reserve trenches I went back with my company to billets, but had only been there for a day or two when I was detached and detailed to the artillery position to the right of us, where both the British and French had mounted naval guns. Guns of all calibres were there, both naval and field pieces, and I got a good look at the famous "Seventy-fives," which are the best guns in the world, in my estimation, and the one thing that saved Verdun.

The "75's" fired thirty shots a minute, where the best the German guns could do was six. The American 3-inch field-piece lets go six times a minute, too. The French Government owns the secret of the mechanism that made this rapid fire possible. When the first "75's" began to roar, the Germans knew the French had found a new weapon, so they were very anxious to get one of the guns and learn the secret.

Shortly afterwards they captured eight guns by a mass attack in which, the Allies claimed, 4,000 German troops were killed. The Boches studied the guns, and tried to turn out pieces like them at the Krupp factory. But somehow they could not get it.

## Gunner Depew

Their imitation “75’s” would only fire five shots very rapidly, and then “cough”—puff, puff, puff, with nothing coming out. The destructive power of the “75’s” is enormous. These guns have saved the lives of thousands of poilus and Tommies, and it is largely due to them that the French are now able to beat Fritz at his own game and give back shell for shell—and then send over some more on their own account.

## CHAPTER V

### WITH THE "75'S "

My pal Brown, of whom I spoke before, had been put in the infantry when he enlisted in the Legion, because he had served in the United States infantry. He soon became a sergeant, which had been his rating in the American service. I never saw him in the trenches, because our outfits were nowhere near each other, but whenever we were in billets at the same time we were together as much as possible.

Brown was a funny card, and I never saw anyone else much like him. A big, tall, red-headed fellow, never saying much and slow in everything he did or said—you would never think he amounted to much or was worth his salt. The boys used to call him "Ginger" Brown, both on account of his red hair and his slow movements. But he would pull a surprise on you every now and then, like this one that he fooled me with.

One morning about dawn we started out for a walk through what used to be Dixmude—piles of stone and brick and mortar. There were no "civvies" to be seen; only mules and horses bringing up casks of water, bags of beans, chloride of lime,

barbed wire, ammunition, etc. It was a good thing we were not superstitious. At that, the shadows along the walls made me feel shaky sometimes.

Finally Brown said : " Come on down ; let's see the ' 75's.' " At this time I had not seen a " 75," except on a train going to the front, so I took him up right away, but was surprised that he should know where they were.

After going half way round Dixmude, Brown said, " Here we are," and started right into what was left of a big house. I kept wondering how he could know so much about it, but followed him. Inside the house was a passage-way under the ruins. It was about seven feet wide and fifty feet long, I should judge.

At the other end was the great old " 75," poking its nose out of a hole in the wall. The gun captain and the crew were sitting about waiting the word for action, and they seemed to know Brown well. I was surprised at that, but still more so when he told me I could examine the gun if I wanted to, just as if he owned it.

So I sat in the seat and trained the cross wires on an object, opened and closed the breech, and examined the recoil.

Then Brown said : " Well, Chink, you will see some real gunnery now," and they passed the word and took stations. My eyes bulged out when I saw Brown take his station with them !

" Silence ! " is about the first command a gun crew gets when it is going into action, but I forgot all about it, and shouted out and asked Brown how the hell he got to be a gunner. But he only grinned and looked serious, as usual. Then I came to, and expected to get a reprimand from the officer, but he only grinned and so did the crew. It seems they had it all planned to spring on me, and they expected I would be surprised.

So we put cotton in our ears, and the captain called the observation tower a short distance away, and they gave him the range. Then the captain called " 4128 metres " to Brown. They placed the nose of a shell in a fuse adjuster, and turned the handle until it reached scale 4128. This set the fuse to explode at the range given. Then they slammed the shell into the breech, locked it shut, and Brown sent his best to Fritz.

The barrel slipped back, threw out the shell case at our feet, and returned over a cushion of grease. Then we received the results by telephone from the observation tower. After he had fired twelve shots, the captain said to Brown : " You should never waste yourself in infantry, son." And old Brown just stood there and grinned.

That was Brown every time. He knew about more things than you could think of. He had read about gunnery and fooled around at Dixmude until they let him play with the " 75's," and finally, here

he was, giving his kindest to Fritz with the rest of them.

I never saw a battery better concealed than this one. Upon the ground you couldn't see the muzzle twenty yards away—and that was all there was to see at any distance. There was a ruined garden just outside the gun quarters, and while the gunners were busy picking apples, there would be a hiss and an explosion, and over would go some of the trees or maybe a man or two, but never a shell struck nearer the guns than that. The poilus used to thank Fritz for helping them pick the apples, because the explosions would bring them down in great style. Shells from our heavy artillery passed just over the garden, too, making an awful racket. But they were not in it with the “75's.”

They gave me a little practice with a “75” under the direction of expert French gunners before I went to my 14-inch naval gun, and, believe me, it was a fine piece. Just picture to yourself a little beauty that can send a 38-pound shell every two seconds for five miles and more, if you want it to, and land on Fritz's vest button every time. There is nothing I like better than a gun, anyway, and I have never since been entirely satisfied with anything less than a “75.”

As you probably know, the opposing artillery in this war is so widely separated that the gunners never see their targets, unless these happen to be buildings—and even then it is rare. So, since an artillery



officer never sees the enemy artillery or infantry, he must depend on others to give him the range and direction.

For this purpose there are balloons and aeroplanes attached to each artillery unit. The aeroplanes are equipped with wireless, but also signal by smoke and direction of flight, while the balloons use telephones. The observers have maps, and powerful glasses, and cameras. Their maps are marked off in zones to correspond with the maps used by the artillery officers.

The observations are signalled to a receiving station on the ground, and are then telephoned to the batteries. All our troops were equipped with telephone signal corps detachments, and this was a very important arm of the service. The enemy position is shelled before an attack, either by barrage or otherwise, and communication between the waves of attack and the artillery is absolutely necessary. Bombardments are directed towards certain parts of the enemy position almost as accurately as you would use a searchlight. The field telephones are very light, and are portable to the last degree. They can be rigged up or knocked down in a very short time. The wire is wound on drums or reels, and you would be surprised to see how quickly our corps established communication between a newly-won trench and headquarters, for instance. They were asking for our casualties almost before we had finished having them.

Artillery fire was directed by men whose duty it

was to work out the range from the information sent them by the observers in the air. Two men were stationed at the switchboard; one man to receive the message and the other to operate the board. As soon as the range was plotted out, it was telephoned to the gunners and they did the rest.

The naval guns at Dixmude were mounted on flat cars, and these were drawn to and fro on the track by little Belgian engines.

After I had been at my gun for several days I was ordered back to my regiment, which was again in the front-line trenches. My course was past both the British and French lines, but quite a distance behind the front lines.

Everywhere ambulances and wagons were going backwards and forwards. I met one French ambulance that was typical of all the rest. It was a long wagon full of poilus from a field hospital near the firing-line, and was driven by a man whose left arm was bandaged to the shoulder. Two poilus, who sat in the rear, on guard, had each been wounded in the leg, and one had had a big strip of his scalp torn off. There was not a sound man in the company. You can imagine what their cargo was like if the convoy was as used up as these chaps. But all who could were singing and talking and full of pep. That is the French for you; they used no more men than they could possibly spare to take care of the wounded, but they were all cheerful about it—always.

Just after I passed this ambulance, the Germans began shelling a section of the road too near me to be comfortable, so I retired to a shell crater about twenty yards off the road, to the rear. A shrapnel shell exploded pretty near me just as I jumped into this hole—I did not look round to see how close it was—and I remember now how an old minstrel joke I had heard on board ship came to my mind at the time, something about a fellow feeling so small he climbed into a hole and pulled it after him, and I wished I might do the same. I flattened myself as close against the wall of the crater as I could, and then I noticed that somebody had made a dug-out in the other wall of the crater, and I started for it.

The shells were exploding so fast by that time that you could not listen for each explosion separately, and just as I jumped into the dugout a regular hail of shrapnel fell on the spot I had just passed. It was pretty dark in the dugout, and the first move I made I bumped into somebody else, and he let out a yell that you could have heard for a mile. It was a Tommy who had been wounded in the hand, and between curses he told me I had sat right on his wound when I moved. I asked him why he did not yell sooner, but he only swore some more. He surely was a great cusser. After a while I asked him if his hand still hurt him, and he said: "Hand, hell! It's my ruddy pipe I've been swearing about, you

blighter. I lost it when the damned bullet hit me." I gave him my pipe, and he seemed perfectly satisfied and did not let out another word.

The bombardment slackened up a bit about this time, and I thought I would have a look round. I did not get out of the crater entirely, but raised myself out of the dugout until I could see the road I had been on. The first thing I saw was a broken-down wagon that had just been hit—in fact, it was toppling over when my eye caught it. The driver jumped from his seat, and while he was in the air his head was torn completely from his shoulders by another shell, I do not know of what kind. This was enough for me, so back I went to the dugout.

How the Germans did it I do not know; there had not been a balloon or aeroplane in the sky for some time.

After a while the bombardment moved away to the east, from which direction I had come, and I knew our batteries were getting it. The Tommy and I came out of the dugout. As I started climbing up the muddy sides I saw a man standing at the edge of it, and could tell by his puttees that he was a Limey. I was having a hard job of it, so without looking up I hailed him.

"That was sure some shelling, wasn't it?" I said. "There's a lad down here with a wounded fin; better give him a hand."

"What shelling do you mean?" says the legs,

without moving. "There's been none in this sector for some time, I think."

The Tommy was right at my heel by this time, and he let out a string of language. I was surprised, too, and still scrambling around in the mud.

"My God," I says, "what have you been drinking?"

Then the Tommy ejaculated, "Gawd 'elp us!" and I looked up and saw that the legs belonged to a Limey officer, a major, I think. And here we had been cussing the eyes off of him!

But he sized it up rightly and gave us a hand, and only laughed when we tried to explain. I got annoyed and told him that all I saw was his legs, and that they did not look like an officer's legs, which might have made it worse, only he was good-natured about it. Then he said that he had been asleep in a battalion headquarters dugout, about a hundred yards away, and only waked up when part of the roof caved in on him. Yet he did not know he had been shelled!

I went on down the road a stretch, but soon found it was easier walking beside it. Also, there were so many wrecked horses and wagons to climb over on the road—besides dead men.

After I had passed the area of the bombardment and got back on the road, I sat down to rest and smoke. A couple of shells had burst so near the crater that they had thrown the dirt right into the

dugout, and I was a little dizzy from the shock. While I was sitting there a squad of Tommies came up with about twice their number of German prisoners. The Tommies had been making Fritz do the goose step, and they started them at it again when they saw me sitting there. It sure is good for a laugh any time, this goose step. I guess they call it that after the fellow who invented it.

One thing I had noticed about a Fritz was the way his coat flared out at the bottom, so I took this chance to find out about it, while they halted for a rest just a little farther down the road. I found that they carried their emergency kits in their coats. These kits contained canned meat, tobacco, needles, thread and plaster—all this in addition to their regular pack.

Then I went down the road some more, but had to stop pretty soon to let a column of French infantry swing on to the road from a field. They were on their way to the trenches as reinforcements. After every two companies there would be a wagon. Pretty soon I saw the uniform of the Legion. Then a company of my regiment came up and I wheeled in with them. We were in the rear of the column. Our boys were not part of the column that had just passed, but were going up for their regular stunt in the front lines, while the others had just arrived at that part of the front.

Then for the first time my feet began hurting me. Our boots were made of rough cowhide and fitted

very well, but it was a day's labour to carry them on your feet. I began to fall behind. I would lag twenty or thirty yards behind and then try to catch up. But the thousands of men ahead of me kept up the steady pace and very few limped, though they had been on the march since 3 A.M. It was then about 11 A.M. Those who did limp were carried in the wagons. But I had seen very few men besides the drivers riding in the wagons, and I wanted to be as tough as the next guy, so I kept on. But, believe me, I was sure glad when we halted for a rest.

That is, the reinforcements did! Our company of the Legion had not come so far, and when the front of the column had drawn out of the way along the road, we kept on filing, as the saying is. I did not care about being tough then and was ready for the wagon.

Only now there were no wagons! They belonged with the other troops. So I had to ease along as best I could for what seemed like hours—to my feet—until we turned off into another road and halted for a rest. I found out later that our officers had gone astray and were lost at this time, though, of course, they did not tell us so. But I suspected it, for, when some stoves or soup kitchens came up, our officers stopped them, and made them serve us with the soup they had been cooking while they travelled along. They would not have done this if we had not been lost, because they would either have known they were

close to our destination, or would have brought a commissary with them.

But I did not stop to argue about it. I understood very clearly that I was hungry, and I think I would have enjoyed a bale of hay just as well as the soup-kitchen horses did. These soup kitchens, by the way, always reminded me of a small-town fire engine, and I could never see one without expecting it to come tearing along with the horses galloping and a fellow hanging on to the stern ringing a gong. I dreamed of this once, in a firing-line dugout, and just as plain as day I saw the soup kitchen dash past, with the fellow ladling out soup as fast as he could go.

We arrived at our section of the trench about 3 o'clock that afternoon, and I rejoined my company. I was all tired out after this trek, and found myself longing for the *Cassard* and the rolling wave, where no Marathons and five-mile stunts were necessary. But this was not in store for me—yet.



## CHAPTER VI

### FRITZ DOES A LITTLE "STRAFEING"

My unit was one of those that saw the Germans place women and children in front of them as shields against our fire. More than a third of our men, I should say, had been pretty tough criminals in their own countries. They always traded their pay against a handful of cards, or a roll of the bones, whenever they got a chance. They had been in most of the dirty parts of the world. This war was not such a novelty to them; just one more job in the list. They could call God, and the saints, and the human body more things than any boss stevedore that ever lived.

Yet they were religious, in a way. Some of them were always reading religious books or saying prayers in different fashions, and between them they believed in every religion and superstition under the sun, I guess. Yet they were the toughest bunch I ever met.

After they saw the Germans using the Belgian women the way they did, almost every man in my company took some kind of vow or other, and most of them kept their vows, too, I believe. And those that were religious got more so, after that.

Our chaplain had always been very friendly with

the men, and while I think they liked him, they were so tough they would never admit it, and some of them claimed he was a Jonah, or jinx, or bad luck of some kind. But they all told him their vows, as soon as they made them, and he was supposed to be a sort of referee as to whether they kept them or not.

The men of the Legion were always singing. Whenever they would be on the march, they would pipe up, and no group of two or three could get together without trying out a barber-shop chord or two. As you probably know, American rag-time is the rage in France, and they knew a lot of popular songs that we have heard in the States. Sometimes they sang them in French and sometimes in English.

The songs they seemed to like best were usually parodies, such as "It's a Long Way to St. Helena." They also were fond of one of the many alleged Hawaiian songs—they all sound alike to me—about Waikiki, or Mauna Loa, or neighbouring ports. Then they had songs that they made up themselves, one for almost every important battle the Legion ever fought in. But the song I liked best was an old song of the Legion, one of their many historical songs, which was called "Rataplan." Believe me, it was great stuff to swing along a road with the whole crew roaring "Rrrrrrat-a-plan!" Another tune that I liked was the regimental march, "Allons, Giron." The men used to sing or hum these songs even in the

trenches, or while we were consolidating an enemy position we had taken.

During my second stint in the front lines things got pretty bad. The Germans were five to our one, and they kept pushing back parts of the line and cleaning out others. And the weather was as bad as it could be, and the food did not always come regularly. Now, before they took their vows, every last man would have been kicking and growling all the time, but as it was, the only time they growled was when the Germans pushed us back.

Things kept getting worse, and you could see that the men talked to the chaplain more, and quite a few of them got real chummy with him.

One morning Fritz started in bright and early to begin his "strafe." The lieutenant was walking up and down the trench to see that the sentries were properly posted and were on the job. A shell whizzed over his head and landed just behind the parados, and the dirt spouted up as, I imagine, a Yellowstone geyser does.

Another officer came up to the lieutenant—a new one who had only joined the company about a week before. They had walked about ten yards when another shell whizzed over them. They lay to and a third one came. There were three in less than five minutes, directly over their heads.

Then a shell landed on the left side of the trench, and a poilu yelled that four men had got it. They

were all wounded, and three died later. The lieutenant went over to them, and just after he passed me, a lad got it square not far from me and was knocked over to where I was lying.

The lieutenant came back and helped me with the first-aid roll, and then the Germans began using shrapnel. The lieutenant was swearing hard about the shrapnel, and the Germans, and everything else.

Farther to the right a shell had just struck near the parados and made a big crater, and across from it, against the parapet, was a young chap with a deep gash in his head, sitting on the fire-step, and next to him a fellow nursing the place where his arm had been blown off. Our bread ration lay all about the trench, and some of the poilus were fishing it out of the mud and water, and wiping the biscuits off on their sleeves or eating as fast as they could. Only, some of the biscuits had fallen in bloody water, and they did not eat these.

A young fellow, hardly more than a boy, stumbled over the parados, and fell into the trench right near the lieutenant, and the lieutenant dressed his wounds himself. I think he was some relation of the boy.

The lieutenant asked him how he felt, but the boy only asked for water and smiled. But you could see he was in great pain. Then the boy said: "Oh, the pain is awful. I am going to die."

"You are all right, old man," the lieutenant said. "You will be home soon. The stretcher-

bearers are coming." So we passed the word for the stretcher-bearers.

Then he took the water-bottle from the boy's side, and sat him up and gave him some water. He left the water-bottle with the chap, and went to hurry the stretcher-bearers along. When he got round the corner of the trench, the boy was slipping back, and the water-bottle had fallen down. So I went over to him and propped him up again, and gave him some more water.

The lieutenant came back with the stretcher-bearers, and he asked one of them, so the boy could not hear him, whether the boy would live.

The stretcher-bearer said: "I don't think so. One through his chest, and right leg broken."

The boy had kept quiet for a while, but all of a sudden he yelled, "In the name of Christ, give me a cigarette!" I handed him a cigarette butt I had found in the dug-out. We were all out of cigarettes.

So they lit it for him and he kept quiet. As soon as they could, they got round the corner of the fire bay with him and through a communication trench to a field hospital. The lieutenant and I walked a little way with him, and he began to thank us, and he told the lieutenant: "Old man, you have been a father and a mother to me."

And the lieutenant said to him: "You have done damn well, old boy. You have done more than your share."

When they started into the communication trench the boy began to scream again. And the lieutenant acted like a wild man. He took out his cigarette-case, but there were no cigarettes in it, and then he swore and put it back again. But in a few minutes he had the case out again, and was swearing worse than ever, and talking to himself.

"The boy isn't dying like a gentleman," he said. "Why, in God's name, couldn't he keep quiet?" I do not think he meant it. He was all nervous and excited, and kept taking out his cigarette-case and putting it back again.

The other officer had gone on to inspect the sentries when the boy rolled into the trench, and a poilu came up to tell us that the officer had been hit. We walked back to where I had been, and there was the officer. If I had been there I would have got it, too, I guess. He was an awful mess. The veins were sticking out of his neck, and one side of him was blown off, so you could see his entrails. Also, his foot was wounded. That is what shrapnel does to you. As I crawled past him I happened to touch his foot, and he damned me all over the place. But when I tried to say I was sorry, I could not, for then he apologised and died a moment later.

There was a silver cigarette-case sticking out of the rags where his side had been blown away, and the lieutenant crossed himself, and reached in and took out the case. But when he prised open the case he

found that it had been bent and cracked, and all the cigarettes were soaked with blood. He swore worse than ever then, and threw his own case away, putting the other officer's case in his pocket.

At this point, our own artillery began shelling, and we received the order to stand to with fixed bayonets. When we got the order to advance, some of the men were already over the parapet, and the whole of us after them, and, believe me, I was as pale as a sheet, just scared to death. I think every man is when he goes over for the first time—every time for that matter. But I was glad we were going to get some action, because it is hard to sit about in a trench under fire and have nothing to do. I had all I could do to hold my rifle.

We ran across No Man's Land. I cannot remember much about it. But when we got to the German trench I fell on top of a young fellow, and my bayonet went right through him. It was a crime to get him, at that. He was as delicate as a pencil.

When I returned to our trenches after my first charge, I could not sleep for a long time afterwards for remembering what that fellow looked like, and how my bayonet slipped into him and how he screamed when he fell. He had his legs and his neck twisted under him after he got it. I thought about it a lot, and it grew to be almost a habit that whenever I was going to sleep I would think about him, and then all hope of sleeping was gone.

Our company took a German trench that time and, along with another company, four hundred prisoners. We had to retire, because the men on our sides did not get through, and we were being flanked. But we lost a lot of men doing it.

When we returned to our trenches we were simply done up, lying round in the front line like a heap of old rags in a narrow alley. None of us showed any signs of life, except a working party that was digging with picks and shovels at some bodies that had been frozen into the mud of the trench.

I used to think all the Germans were big and fat and strong, and, of course, some of the Grenadier regiments are, but lots of the Boches I saw were little and weak like the fellow I "got" in my first charge.

It was a good piece of work to take the prisoners, and a novelty for me to look them in the face—the fellows I had been fighting. Because, when you look a Hun in the face you can see the yellow streak. Even if you are their prisoner, you can tell that the Huns are yellow.

Maybe you have heard pigs being butchered. It sounded like that when we got to them. When they attacked us, they yelled to beat the band. I guess they thought they could scare us. But you cannot scare machine-guns, nor the Foreign Legion, either. So when they could not scare us, they were up against it and had to fight. I will admit, though, that



the first time Fritz came over and began yelling I thought the whole German army was after me, at that, and Kaiser Bill playing the drum. And how they hate a bayonet! They would much rather sit in a ditch and pot you.

I admit I am not crazy about bayonet fighting myself, as a general proposition, but I will say that there have been times when I was serving a gun behind the front lines when I wished for a rifle and a bayonet in my hands and a chance at Fritz man to man.

It was in this charge that our chaplain was put out of commission. As we were lined up, waiting to climb on to the fire-step, and then over the parapet, the chaplain came down the line speaking to each man as he went. He would not say much, but just a few words and then make the sign of the Cross. He was in a black cassock.

He was just one man from me as we got the word and stood upon the fire-step. He was not armed with as much as a pin, but he jumped upon the step and stuck his head over the parapet, and got it square, landing right beside me. I thought he was killed, but when we got back we found he was only wounded. The men who saw it were over the parapet before the order was given, and then the whole lot after them, because they, too, thought he was killed, and supposed he never would know how they came out about their vows. All the men in the

company were glad when they found he was only wounded.

While half of us were on the fire-step throughout the day, or night, the other half would be in the dug-outs, or sitting around in the bottom of the trench, playing little games, or mending clothes, or sleeping, or cooking, or doing a thousand and one things. The men were always in good humour at such times, and it seemed to me even more so when the enemy fire was heavy.

If a man was slightly wounded, down would come the rifles to order arms, and some poilu was sure to shout, "Right this way! One franc!" It was a sort of standing joke, and they always did it. The poilu who did it most of the time was a Swiss, and he was always playing a joke on somebody, or imitating some one of us, or making faces.

Then he would shout, as though he was selling tickets to a show: "Don't rush! There's plenty of room. Watch your purses!" and so on. One time, while we were under a very heavy bombardment, and it was too dangerous to go through the communication trenches, two fellows got wounded in the left hand. They were round the corner of the trench from each other, but this Swiss got wind of them and brought one of them up to the other and pretended to introduce them. He said they would now be comrades in hands instead of arms, only that each had got it in the same hand. Pretty soon he had them

playing marbles with some shrapnel bullets that had fallen near them. I do not know what countries these two fellows were from, but they both spoke English. I had never heard them speak anything but French before they were wounded, though. I tried to talk to them then, but they did not want to talk to me. They played marbles until they could go out to the dressing-station.

This same Swiss got hold of a revolver somewhere, and he used to spend his spare time potting trench rats. He would save some of his bread ration and put it on the parados, and then wait for the rats. He killed lots of them. He used to give some of the dead rats to the rifle grenadiers, and he claimed that they shot them over with the rifle grenades to Fritz. I do not know whether they really did so or not, but I know he used to throw dead rats at the German trenches when we were only forty-five yards from them. And some of the men said he went on a raiding party one time with a haversack full of dead rats.

So we were all sorry when this Swiss "went West," as the Limeys say, and we tried to keep up his jokes and say the same things and so forth. But they did not go very well after he was dead. He got his notice in the same charge in which the chaplain was wounded. He was one of the bunch that charged before the order was given, when the chaplain got it, and was running pretty near me until we got to the Boche wire. I had to stop to get through,

though most of it was cut up by artillery fire, but he must have jumped it, for when I looked up he was twenty or thirty paces ahead of me. We got to the Germans about that time, and I was pretty busy for a while. But soon I saw him again. He was pulling his bayonet out of a Boche, when another one made a jab at him and stuck him in the arm. Then the Boche made a swing at him with his rifle, but the Swiss dropped on one knee and dodged it. He kept defending himself with his rifle, but there was another German on him by this time, and he could not get up. The corporal of our squad came up just about that time, but he was too late, because one of the Boches got to the Swiss with his bayonet. He did not have time to withdraw it before our corporal stuck him. The other German made a pass at the corporal, but he was too late. The corporal felled him with a terrific blow from his rifle butt. The Huns were pretty thick around there just as another fellow and myself came up. A Boche swung his rifle at the corporal and, when he dodged it, the Boche almost got me. The swing took him off his feet, and then the corporal did as pretty a bit of work as I ever saw. He jumped for the Boche who had fallen, landed on his face with both feet, and gave it to the next one with his bayonet all at the same time. He was the quickest man I ever saw.

There were a couple of well-known shoemakers in the next company, and I saw one of them get

under Fritz's guard with his foot, and, believe me, there was some force in that kick. He must have driven the German's chin clear through the back of his neck.

We thought it was pretty tough luck to lose both the chaplain and the village wit in the same charge, along with half of our officers, and then have to give up the trench. Every man in the bunch was sore as a boil when we got back.

As you probably know, it is the usual thing to give the men in the trenches a small issue of rum before they go over the top to tackle the Boches. They say there are lots of people in the States and other countries who think it is very wrong to give the soldiers rum.

Well, now :

Suppose you have not changed your shoes or socks for five days. And suppose that all this time you have been in water up to your knees, and have had to snatch your sleep, four hours at a time, in stinking mud that reminds you of the time they flushed the sewer in front of your house. Suppose your clothes are soaked through and through with rain, and mud, and sweat, and worse, and that they, too, have been on you for five days. And besides, they are so stiff with dirt, or maybe blood, that they will only bend where they are freshly wet——

Suppose you are simply swarming with lice. You

can hardly sleep for the itching all over your body, and when you roll over, sometimes, you can almost hear the crackling as the lice are mashed against you. Imagine yourself waking up some fine morning to find a rat almost as big as a cat gnawing your boot. Think of waking up suddenly in the dark and feeling the wet fur of a rat brush under your chin——

And suppose, too, that a few yards in front of you there are rotting human bodies sunk in the mud. And some of them were once men who had given you cigarettes and showed you photographs——

Suppose your special pal's brains had been blown all over you two hours before. Think of the horror of reaching into a mud bank in the grey, cold morning and pulling out a maggotty human hand——

You have lived between a thunder-clap and a flash of lightning for five days, and have stared at two walls of mud for the same length of time. And your nerves jump and shiver whenever there is a moment's silence——

Imagine the discomfort of lining up at 4.30 on a snowy morning, loaded down under dead pounds of pack, and overcoat and rifle. And suppose that, in a few minutes, you were going to climb over your mud wall, and run through the dark, and trip over barbed wire and bodies, and fall in shell holes full of slime; that thousands of jagged pieces of iron were going to whizz past you, that machine-guns would

be sweeping over the whole field, that shells the size of umbrella-stands would be exploding all round you, that thousands of rifle bullets were searching for you——

Suppose, too, that if you got past all these things, you were going to stick a sharp piece of steel into a soft, grunting body, and put your foot in its ugly face and pull your steel out, and rush on and do it over again, and swing your rifle-butt against a chattering head. And that if you did not do these things they would be done to you, and probably would anyway——

And that, if you did do them, and your comrades did, there would be two or three hours' digging in the captured trench to hold it in the face of the enemy——

Suppose you were as miserable as five days' hell in a sewer could make you, and knew you had to do all these things, and that you would have to start doing them in fifteen minutes. Meanwhile you were so cold you could not move without aching, and you were consumed with the fear that the crucial moment might find you afraid——

And suppose the man next to you was just drinking a mouthful of stuff that would warm him, and brace him, and help him over into his day's work——

And suppose the non-com. was offering you a drink of the same stuff——

Wouldn't you take it?

You men in slippers, with fluffy balls on them, and fur around the edges, sitting in a Morris chair, with the throttle pulled way open, and a box of Peerless Dainties on the arm——

What do you think about it? Do you not think that the boys over there ought to have a little of this stuff now and then?

In the months that have passed since I returned to the States from the German prison camps, I have had one cocktail and two coffee cognacs. That is how it made a drunkard out of me.



## CHAPTER VII

### STOPPING THE HUNS AT DIXMUDE

I WAS standing in a communication trench that connected one of our front line trenches with a crater caused by the explosion of a mine. All about me men of the third line were coming up, climbing around, digging, hammering, shifting planks, moving sandbags up and down, bringing up new timbers, reels of barbed wire, ladders, cases of ammunition, machine-guns, trench mortars—all the things that make an army look like a general stores on legs.

The noise of the guns was just deafening. Our own shells passed not far above our heads, so close were the enemy trenches, and the explosions were so near and so violent that when you rested your rifle butt on something solid, like a rock, you could feel it shake and hum every time a shell landed.

Our first line was just on the outskirts of the town, in trenches that had been won and lost by both sides many times. Our second line was in the streets, and the third line was almost at the south end of the town.

The Huns were hard at it, shelling the battered remains of Dixmude, and to the right stretcher-

bearers were working in lines so close that they looked like two parades passing each other. But the bearers from the company near me had not returned from the emergency dressing station, and the wounded were piling up, waiting for them.

A company of the 2nd Foreign Legion had come up to take their stations in the crater, under the parapet of sandbags. A shell landed among them just before they entered the crater, and sent almost a whole squad West, besides wounding several others.

Almost before they occupied the crater the wires were laid and reached back to us, and the order came for us to remain where we were until further orders. So I began to walk slowly along behind a line of legionaries, who leaned up against the parapet with their rifles ready.

I had not got very far when someone said, in a plain Bowery accent, "Ah there, Doc!" and a little chap, in the uniform of the Legion, with a "tin basin" on his head, left his rifle leaning up against the parapet and walked over to where I was.

"Don't you know me, Doc?" he said. "Nig Lamb, from the Fiftieth Ward?"

"Well, I'll be damned," I said, "if it isn't my old side-kick, Nig! Right down here in the bald-head row. What do you think of that?" But I had never even heard of him before.

"Guess you never thought you'd see me here in this tin derby, picking Fritzie and Heinies, did you?"

Ain't it hell the way they got this whole bunch sewed up in the gully? "

Then he went back to the parapet and took up his rifle again, and I crouched down behind the parapet. "Nig," I said, "how did you come to enlist in the Foreign Legion? "

"Ahr-rr-r-r," he said, and a whole lot of cuss words. "Too many vee-vees, that's what put little Fido in the sausage mill."

I did not know what he was talking about, but I let him go on.

"Me and two other boys was handling some ponies down to the Boolong track, when this here war busted open and put everything on the blink. 'Aw hell!' I says, 'let's go back to Paris and look 'em over before we ease back to the States.'

"Say, these here dames had went crazy over this war stuff. 'Vive! Vive la France!' they says, and by God, we vee-veed too. We put on a little party at one of them cafés, and hit the old vino till she hollered for help. Pretty soon we began waving little American flags and hollering, 'To hell with the Huns!' and vee-veeing everything else.

"Then, all I can remember is marching down the boolyvard with a guy in red pants, and I has a committee meeting with a lot of other guys, and pretty soon I was hollering: 'Wow, lemme at 'em! Vee-vee la France!' and all like that.

"When they asks me would I sign up, I guess I

must have said ' vee-vee,' and they took it for ' oui, oui,' 'cause here I am, and a pretty damn long way from home. Ain't it so, Doc? "

" So you didn't know you enlisted? "

" Ahr-rr-r-r hell! does it make any difference to these here guys what you know and what you don't? " Then he began firing, though none of the rest was doing so, and pretty soon a non-com. came along and made him quit.

" There you are, Doc! " he said. " When you want action, you can't have it, and when you want peace and quiet—bam! ' Go out and get me a few Heinies for breakfast,' they says.

" Believe me, a guy can vee-vee himself into a lot of trouble if he yells loud enough," he said. " I'm getting mine right now."

" Well," I said, " do you know anything better to vee-vee than France? "

" Yes," he said, " N'Yawk! Vee-vee N'Yawk! Vee-vee N'Yawk! " and he must have yelled it fifty times. Then he began shooting again, Lord knows what at, and the non-com. ran up and swore at him in French, and Nig let out another " vee-vee " or two and put down his rifle again.

The non-com. looked at me and shook his head behind Nig's back and said " *cafard*." That is what they call it when a man goes crazy temporarily. But I knew it was just Nig's way of letting off steam.

Nig was just starting to ask me some questions

when the officers passed down the line. "Baionnettes, mes enfants," and I went back to my own section.

Then we got the complete orders. We were to make no noise, but were all to be ready in ten minutes. We put on goggles and respirators. In ten minutes the bombers were to leave the trenches. Three mines were to explode, and then we were to take and hold a certain portion of the enemy trenches not far off. We were all ready to start up the ladders when they moved Nig's section over to ours, and he sneaked up to me and whispered behind his hand, "Be a sport, Doc; make it fifty-fifty and gimme a chance."

I had no idea what he meant, and he had to get back to his squad. Then the bombers came up to the ladders, masked, and with loaded sacks on their left arms. "One minute now," said the officers, getting on their own ladders and drawing their revolvers—though most of the officers of the Legion charged with rifle and bayonet, like their men.

Then—Boom! Slam! Bang!—and the mines went off.

"Allez!" and then the parapet was filled with bayonets and men scrambling and crawling and falling and getting up again. The smoke drifted back on us, and then our own machine-guns began ahead of us.

Up towards the front, the bombers were fishing in

their bags and throwing, just like boys after a rat along the docks. The black smoke from the "Jack Johnsons" rolled over us, and probably there was gas, too, but you could not tell.

The front lines had taken their trenches and gone on, and you could see them, when you stood on a parapet, running about like hounds through the enemy communication trenches, bombing out dugouts, disarming prisoners—very scarey-looking in their masks and goggles. The wounded were coming back slowly. Then we got busy with our work in the dugouts and communication trenches and fire bays, with bayonets and bombs digging the Boches out and sending them "West." And every once in a while a Fritz on one side would step out and yell "Kamarad," while, like as not, on the other side his pal would pot you with a revolver when you started to pick him up, thinking he was wounded.

Then we stood aside at the entrance to a dugout and some Boches came out in single file, shouting "Kamarad" for all they were worth. One of them had his mask and face blown off; yet he was trying to talk, with the tears rolling down over the raw flesh. He died five minutes later.

Farther down the trench we found poor Nig. While we were taking off his "tin derby" and tunic, he asked who it was, and when I said, "It's Doc," he must have thought I was a medico, sure enough.

"Through the belly, Doc. Gimme a drink."

That would have finished him, of course, so I said there was no water.

“All right, Doc, all right. I’ll wait. It’s in the belly, ain’t it, Doc? It ain’t nothing, is it? Pull me through, Doc.”

“Sure I will, Nig. You’ll be all right in a minute.”

“Say, Doc, don’t hand me no cones of hokey-pokey. Gimme a drop of the stuff. Tell me, do I croak, Doc? Well, I’m going to fool you the same as I fooled the guys at Luke’s Hospital the time I got shot up in the Subway. I’ve went through worse than this. I ain’t hurt bad, am I, Doc?”

I tried to say something to him, but he would not stop talking.

“Would I let myself croak so as you can give me the ha-ha? I can see myself doing that, you bet. Say, Doc, will you talk business?”

“Listen, Nig, the stretcher-bearers will be here in a second——”

“To hell with them guys! I’m asking you if you’ll make it fifty-fifty. Fifty-fifty, fifty-fifty, Doc—fifty-fifty——”

He kept on, almost singing “fifty-fifty,” and then he was quiet for a while. All of a sudden he sang out: “For Christ’s sake, Doc, talk business!” and then not a word out of him.

The stretcher-bearers finally came up and took him away, but he did not let out a sound. They reported

later that he had got it in the thigh and not the stomach, and a lad told me he kept yelling for Doc and singing "fifty-fifty." It got to be a sort of password in his section, and I am telling the truth when I say that I have seen men from his company slipping the steel to Fritz and yelling, "Feefty-feefty, Doack," as they did it.

I never did hear what happened to Nig, though. It was not his line, this war, as he said, and I hope he got back to "N'Yawk" before he went over the top for the last time.

One night, while I was lying back in the trench trying not to think of anything and go to sleep, the bombs began to get pretty thick around and, when I could not stand it any longer, I rushed out into the bay of the fire-trench and right up against the parapet, where it was safer.

Hundreds of star shells were being sent up by both sides, and the field and the trenches were as bright as day. All up and down the trenches our men were dodging about, keeping out of the way of the bombs that were being thrown in our faces. It did not seem as if there was any place where it was possible to get cover. Most of the time I was picking out of my eyes dirt that explosions had driven into them.

If you went into a dugout, the men already there would shout, "Don't stick in a crowd—spread out!" While you were in a dugout, you kept expecting to be buried alive, and when you went outside, you thought



the Boches were aiming at you direct—and there was no place at all where you felt safe.

But the fire bay looked better than the other places to me. I had not been there more than a few minutes when a big one dropped in, and then that bay was just one mess. Out of the twenty-four men in the bay only eight escaped. We were just nothing but blood, with pieces of flesh, and brains, and entrails all over us. It made me so sick I had just to lie down, and vomit, and shake, and sweat. I could not move. But I knew that if *that* shell did not get me, the one that did would be the grand-daddy of all shells.

When the stretcher-bearers got there they did not have much to do in the way of rescue—it was more pall-bearers' work.

A stretcher-bearer was picking up one of the boys, when a grenade landed alongside of him, and you could not find a fragment of either of them. That made two that landed within twelve feet of me; yet I was not even scratched.

When I got so that I could move, I went over to where the captain was standing, looking through a periscope over the parapet. I was very nervous and excited, and was afraid to speak to him, but somehow I thought I ought to ask for orders. But I could not say a word. Finally a shell whizzed over our heads—just missed us, it seemed like, and I broke out: “What do you see? What’s all of the news?” and so on. I guess I chattered like a monkey.

## Gunner Depew

Then he yelled: "You're the gunner officer. You're just in time—I've located their mortar batteries."

I surely wished I was the gunner officer: I would have enjoyed it more if I could have got back at Fritz somehow. But I was not the gunner officer, and I told him so. I had to shout at him quite a while before he would believe me. Then he wanted me to find the gunner officer, but I did not know where to find him. If I could have got to our guns I guess I would have had another medal for working overtime, but I missed the chance there.

About this time another bomb came over and knocked out the best friend I had in my company. Before the war he had been one of the finest singers in the Paris opera houses. When he was with us he used to say that the only difference between him and Caruso was \$2,500 a night.

A poilu and I dragged him into a dugout, but it was too late. One side of his face was blown off; the whole right side of him was stripped off, and four fingers of the right hand were gone.

I stuck my head out of the dugout, and there was the captain discussing the matter with himself, cursing the Germans from here to Heligoland, and putting in a word for the bombs every once in a while. All up and down the trenches you could hear our men cursing the Germans in all kinds of languages. Believe me, I did my bit, and I could hear

somebody else using good old United States cuss words, too. It certainly did not make me feel any better, but it gave me something to do. I think that was why all of us cursed so much then, though we were pretty handy with language at any time. But when you are under heavy fire like that, and cannot give it back as good as you get, you go crazy unless you have something to do. Cussing is the best thing we could think of.

Up the trench, the third bay was simply smashed in, and the Germans were placing bomb after bomb right in it and in ours. The captain yelled out that he was going up to the next bay to examine it, but no sooner had he got there than he had his head taken clean off his shoulders.

At daybreak our trenches were all pounded in, and most of our dugouts were filled up. Then Fritz opened up with his artillery fire right on us. We thought they were going to charge, and we supposed their barrage would lift and we could see them come over.

We received orders to stand to with fixed bayonets. Then the man at the periscope shouted: "They come!"

A battery directly behind us went into action first, and then they all joined in, and inside of five minutes about eight hundred guns were raising hell with Fritz. The Boches were caught square in No Man's Land, and our rifles and machine-guns simply

mowed them down. Many of them came half-way across, then dropped their guns, and ran for our trenches to give themselves up. They could not have got back to their own trenches.

It was a shame to waste a shell on these poor fish. If they had been civvies, the law would prevent you from hitting them—you know the kind. They could hardly drag themselves along.

That is the way they look when you have got *them*. But when they have got *you*—kicks, cuffs, bayonet jabs—there is nothing they will not do to add to your misery. They seem to think that it keeps up their own courage.

An artillery fire like ours was great fun for the gunners, but it was not much fun for Fritz, or for us in the trenches. We got under cover almost as much as Fritz, and held thumbs for the gunners to get through in a hurry.

Then the fire died down, and it was so quiet it made you jump. I heard the same man who had helped me cuss in American, shout out: “Old Fritz has got a bellyful of the hell he started now.” We were so used to shouting we could not talk naturally for quite a while. I never did find out who this American was, although I looked for him and asked about him.

We thought our parapet was busted up a good deal, but when we looked through the periscope and saw what had happened to Fritz’s trenches,

believe me, as the negro said, they were practically ruined.

Out in No Man's Land, it looked like Woolworth's 5-and-10; everywhere were grey uniforms, with tin cups and accoutrements that belonged to the Germans before our artillery and machine-guns got to them.

Our stretcher-bearers were busy carrying the wounded back to the first-aid dressing-station, for, of course, we had suffered, too. From there the *blessés* were shipped to the clearing station.

The dead lay in the trenches all day, and at night they were carried out by working parties to "Stiff Park," as I called it.

A man with anything on his mind ought not to go to the front-line trenches. He will be crazy inside of a month. The best way is not to give a tinker's curse whether it rains or snows: there are plenty of important things to worry about.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ON RUNNER SERVICE

ONE night a man named Bartel and I were detailed for Runner service, and were instructed to go to Dixmude and deliver certain dispatches to a man, whom I will call the Burgomaster, and report to the Branch Staff Headquarters that had been secretly located in another part of the town. We were to travel in an automobile and keep a sharp watch as we went, for Dixmude was being contested hotly at that time, and German patrols were in the neighbourhood. No one knew exactly where they would break out next.

So we started out from the third-line trenches, but very shortly one of our outposts stopped us. Bartel carried the dispatches and drove the car too, so it was up to me to explain things to the sentries. They were convinced after a bit of arguing. Just as we were leaving, a message came over the 'phone from our commander, telling them to hold us when we came. It was lucky they stopped us, for otherwise we would have been out of reach by the time his message came. The commander told me, over the telephone, that if a French flag flew over the town, the coast would be clear; if a Belgian, that our

forces were either in control, or were about to take over the place, but that German patrols were near. After this we started again.

When we had passed the last post, we kept a sharp lookout for the flag on the pole of the old Fish Market, for by this we would get our bearings—and perhaps, if it should be a German flag, a timely warning. But after we were down the road a bit and had got clear, we saw a Belgian flag whipping around in a good strong breeze. But while that showed that our troops, or the British, were about to take over the place, it also indicated that the Germans were somewhere near by. Which was not so cheerful.

As we went through the suburbs along the canal, which runs on the edge of the town, we found that all the houses were battered up. We tried to hail several heads that stuck themselves out of the spaces between buildings and withdrew themselves just as quickly, but we could not get an answer. Finally, we got hold of a man who came out from a little café.

He told us that the Germans had been through the town, and had shot it up considerably, killing and wounding a few inhabitants, but that shortly afterwards a small force of Belgian cavalry had arrived and driven the Boches out. The Germans were expected either to return or begin a bombardment at any moment, and all the inhabitants who

sported cellars were hiding in them. The rest were trying to get out of the town with their belongings as best they could.

On reaching our objective, we made straight for the Hôtel de Ville, where we were admitted and, after a short wait, taken to the Burgomaster. We questioned him as to news, for we had been instructed to pick up any information he might have as to conditions. But we did not get much, for he could not go about because of the Germans, who had made it a policy to terrorise the people of the town.

We had just got into the car, and were about to start, when the Burgomaster himself came running out. He ordered us to leave the car there, and said he would direct us where to go. He insisted that we should go on foot, but I could not understand when he tried to explain why.

About fifty yards away, the other side of the road was piled high with rifles, lances, bayonets, and all kinds of weapons. But the Burgomaster would not explain this. He certainly was a pig-headed boy, if there ever was one. He began puffing about this time, and I thought he was wishing he had let us drive him in the car. Finally, he said he would go back, and he showed us which way our course lay.

We saw two soldiers ahead of us on the road, and we waved at them and tried to make them stop, but they did not pay the slightest attention. We sprinted a bit and caught up with them, and after a while they



cut loose and began to talk. One of them, a lad of about eighteen, had on a pair of cavalry boots, which he had pulled off of a German he had killed. He told us about it several times, and we laughed and kidded him along, until he must have thought us the best fellows he had ever seen. Actors are not the only people who like applause. Then we left the road.

We soon saw the probable reason for the Burgo-master's refusal to ride in the car. All round for about a mile the roads were heavily mined, and small red flags on iron staves were stuck between the cobblestones as warnings not to put in much time around those places. Also there were notices stuck up all about warning people of the mines, and forbidding heavy carts to pass. When we got off of the road I breathed again!

After a great deal of questioning, we finally reached our destination, and made our report to the local commandant. We told him all we could and, in turn, received various bits of information from him. We were then taken over to the hotel. Here we read a few Paris newspapers that were several weeks old until about eight, when we had dinner, and a fine dinner it was, too.

After we had eaten all we could, and wished for more room in the hold, we went out into the garden and yarned a while with some gendarmes and then went to bed. We had a big room on the third floor

front. We had just turned in, and were all set for a good night's rest, when there was an explosion of a different kind from any I had heard before, and we and the bed were rocked about like a canoe in the wake of a stern-wheeler.

There were seven more explosions, and then they stopped, though we could hear the rattle of a machine-gun at some distance away. Bartel said it must be the Forts, and after some argument I agreed with him. He said that the Germans must have tried an advance under cover of a bombardment, and that as soon as the Forts got into action, the Germans breezed. We were not worried much, so we did not get out of bed.

A few minutes later we heard footsteps on the roof, and then a woman in a window across the street asking a gendarme whether it was safe to go back to bed. Then I got up and took a look into the street. There were a lot of people standing around talking, but it was not interesting enough to keep a tired man up, so into the hay. Bartel was already fast asleep, but he did not get much of a start on me at that, for I think I must have slept twice as hard as he did to catch up.

It seemed about the middle of the night when Bartel called me, saying it was time to get to work. We found he had made a poor guess, for when we were half dressed, he looked at his watch and it was only a quarter past seven, but we decided to stay up,

since we were that far along, and then go down and cruise for a breakfast.

When we got downstairs and found some of the hotel people, it took them a long time to get it into our heads that there had been some real excitement during the night. The explosions were those of bombs dropped by a Zeppelin, which had sailed over the city.

The first bomb had fallen less than two hundred yards from where we slept. No wonder the bed rocked! It had struck a narrow three-storey house round the corner from the hotel and had blown it to bits. Ten people had been killed outright and a number died later. The bomb tore a fine hole and hurled pieces of itself several hundred yards. The street itself was filled with stones, and a number of houses were down and others wrecked. When we got out into the street and talked with some army men, we found that even they were surprised by the force of the explosion.

We learned that the Zepp had sailed not more than five hundred feet above the town. Its motor had been stopped just before the first bomb was let go, and it had slid along perfectly silent with all lights out. The purr that we had thought was machine-guns, after the eighth explosion, was the starting of the motor as the Zepp got out of range of the guns that were being set for the attack.

The last bomb had struck in a large square. It

tore a hole in the cobblestone pavement about thirty feet square and five feet deep. Every window in the square was smashed. The fronts of the houses were riddled with various-sized holes. All the crockery, and china, and mirrors in the houses were in fragments.

Not much more than an hour before the Zepp came, we had been sitting in a room at the house of the local military Commandant, right under a big glass-dome skylight. This house was now a very pretty ruin, and it was just as well that we left when we did. You could not even find a splinter of the big round table. The next time I sit under a glass skylight in Dixmude, I want a lad with a live eye for Zeppelins on guard outside.

Something about the Branch Headquarters ruins made us think of breakfast, which we had forgotten, so back to the hotel. Then we started for our lines. We were ordered to keep to the main road all the way, or we would be shot on sight, and to report to headquarters immediately on our return. I thought if the sight of me was so distasteful to anybody, I would not take the chance of offending, being anxious to be polite in such cases. So we stuck to the main road.

Fritz did not give us any trouble and we were back by five, with all hands out to greet us when we hove in sight, and a regular prodigal-son welcome on tap, for we were later than they had expected,

and they had made up their minds that some accident had happened.

While I was round Dixmude, I saw many living men and women and children who had been mutilated by the Germans, but most of them were women and children. Almost everyone of the mutilated men was too old for military service. The others had been killed, I guess.

But the Belgians were not the only ones who had suffered from German kultur. Many French wounded were tortured by the Huns, and we were constantly finding the mutilated bodies of our troops. It was thought that the Germans often mutilated a dead body as an example to the living.

The Germans had absolutely no respect whatever for the Red Cross. For instance, they captured a wagon loaded with forty French wounded, and shot everyone of them. I saw the dead bodies.

When the Germans came to Dixmude, they collected all the men and women and children, and made them march before them with their hands in the air. Those who did not were knocked down. After a while some of them saw what they were going to get and, being as game sports as I ever heard of, tried to fight. They were killed out of hand, of course.

The former burgomaster had been shot and finished off with an axe, though he had not resisted, because he wanted to save the lives of his citizens.

They told me of one case, in Dixmude, where a man came out of his house, trying to carry his father, a man of eighty, to the square, where they were ordered to report. The old man could not raise his hands, so they dragged his son away from him, knocked the old man on the head with an axe, and left him there to die. Those who were spared were made to dig the graves for the others.

There was a doctor in Dixmude who certainly deserves a military cross if any man ever did. He was called from his house by the Germans at 5.30 one morning. He left his wife, who had had a baby two days before, in the house. He was taken to the square, lined up against a wall with three other big men of the town.

Then he saw his wife and baby being carried to the square on a mattress by four Germans. He begged to be allowed to kiss his wife good-bye, and they granted him permission. As he stepped away, there was a rattle and the other men went West. They shot him, too, but though he was riddled with bullets he lived somehow, and begged the German officer to let him accompany his wife to the prison where they were taking her. This was granted, too, but on the way they heard the sound of firing. The soldiers yelled, "Die Franzosen!" and dropped the mattress and ran. But it was only some of their own butchers at work.

Dr. Laurent carried his wife and baby to an old

aqueduct that was being rebuilt by the creek. There they lived for three days and three nights on the few herbs and the water that Dr. Laurent sneaked out and got at night. Dr. Laurent says that when the Germans killed and crucified the civilians at Dixmude, they first robbed them of their watches, pocket-books, rings and other things. One lady [name deleted by Censor] had three thousand francs stolen from her and was misused besides.

These were only a few of the things that happened at just one place where the Germans got to work with their kultur. So you can picture the Belgians agreeing to a German peace while there is a Belgian alive to argue about it. They will remember the Germans a long time, I think. But they need not worry: there are a lot of us who will not forget, either.

## CHAPTER IX

### LAI'D UP FOR REPAIRS

ONE night after I had been at Dixmude for about three weeks, we made a charge in the face of very heavy fire. Our captain always stood at the parapet when we were going over, and made the sign of the Cross and shouted, "For God and France!" Then we would go over. Our officers always led us, but I have never seen a German officer lead a charge. They always were behind their men, driving instead of leading. I do not believe they are as brave as they are said to be.

Well, we went over this time, and the machine-guns were certainly going strong. We were pretty sore about the chaplain and the Swiss and all that, and we put up an awful fight, but we could not make it and had to come back. Only one company reached the Boche trenches, and not a man of it returned save those who had been wounded on the way and so did not reach the trench. They were just wiped out.

The captain was missing, too. We thought he was done for, but about two o'clock in the morning he came back. He simply fell over into the trench, all in. He had been wounded four times, and had



lain in a shell crater full of water for several hours. He would not go back for treatment then, and when daylight came it was too late, because we were practically cut off by artillery fire behind the front-line trenches.

When daylight came, the artillery fire opened up right on us, and the Germans had advanced their lines into some trenches formerly held by us and hardly forty-five yards away. We received bombs and shells right in our faces. A Tunisian in our company got crazy and ran back over the parados. He ran a few yards, then stopped and looked back at us. I think he was coming to his senses and would have started back to us. Then the spot where he had been was empty, and a second later his body from the chest down fell not three yards from the parados. I do not know where the top part went. That same shell cut a groove in the low hill-top before it exploded. He had been hit by a big shell and absolutely cut in two. I have seen this happen to four men, but this was the only case in Flanders.

About seven o'clock we received reinforcements, and poured fresh troops over and re-took the trench. No sooner had we entered it, however, than the Germans turned their artillery on us, not even waiting for their own troops to retire safely. They killed numbers of their own men in this way. But the fire was so heavy that, when they counter-attacked, we

had to retire again, and this time they followed us and drove us beyond the trench we had originally occupied.

We left them there, with our artillery taking care of them, and our machine-guns trying to enfilade them, and moved to the right. There was a group of trees thereabout like a small wood and, as we passed, the Germans concealed in it opened fire on us, and we retired to some reserve trenches. We were pretty much scattered by this time and badly cut up. We re-formed there and were joined by others of our troops, in small groups—what was left of squads and platoons and singly. Our captain had got it a fifth time, meanwhile, but he would not leave us, as he was the ranking officer. He had a scalp wound, but the others were in his arms and shoulders. He could not move his hands at all.

But he led our charge when we ran for the woods. We carried some machine-guns with us as we went, and the gunners would run a piece, set up, fire while we opened up for them and run on again. Some troops came out of a trench still farther to the right and helped us, and we drove the Germans out of the wood and occupied it ourselves.

From there we had the Germans in our old trench almost directly from the rear and we simply cleaned them out. I think all the vows were kept that day, or else the men who made them died first.

I was shot through the thigh some time or other

after the captain got back. It felt just like a needle-prick at first, and then for a while my leg was numb. A couple of hours after we recaptured our trench I started out for the rear and hospital. The wound had been hurting for some time. They carried the captain out on a stretcher about the same time, but he died on the way from loss of blood. Fresh troops came up to relieve us, but our men refused to go, and though officially they were not there in the trench they stayed until they took the captain away. Then back to billets—not bullets this time. I believe that we were mentioned in the dispatches for that piece of work, but I do not know as I was in the hospital for a short time afterwards. I do not remember much about going to the hospital except that the ambulance made an awful racket going over the stone-paved streets of Étaples and that the bearer who picked up one end of my stretcher had eyes like a dead fish's floating on water; also that there were some civvies standing around the entrance as we were being carried in.

The first thing they do in the hospital is to take off your old dirty bandages and slide your stretcher under a big electric magnet. A doctor comes in and places his hand over your wound, and they let down the magnet over his hand and turn on the juice. If the shell fragment or bullet in you is more than seven centimetres deep you cannot feel the pain. The first doctor reports to the chief how deep your wound is

and where it is situated, and then a nurse comes up to you where you lie with your clothes still on and asks you to take the "pressure."

Then they lift you on a four-wheeled cart and roll you to the operating theatre. They take off your clothes there. I remember I liked to look at the nurses and surgeons, they looked so good in their clean white clothes.

Then they stick hollow needles into you, which hurt a good deal, and you take the pressure. After a while they begin cutting away the bruised and maybe rotten flesh, removing the old cloth, pieces of dirt, and so forth, and scraping away the splinters of bone.

You think for sure you are going to bleed to death. The blood rushes through you like lightning, and if you get a sight of yourself you can feel yourself turning pale. Then they hurry you to your bed and cover you over with blankets and hot-water bottles. They raise your bed on chairs so the blood will run up towards your head, and after a while your eyes open and the doctor says, "Oui, oui, il vivra," meaning that you still had some time to spend before finally going West.

The treatment we got in the hospital was great. We received cigarettes, tobacco, matches, magazines, and clean clothes. The men do not talk about their wounds much, and everybody tries to be happy and to show it. The food was fine and there was lots of it.

I do not think there were any doctors in the world better than ours, and they were always trying to make things easy for us. They did not rip the dressings off your wounds as some of the butchers do in some of our dispensaries that I know of, but took them off carefully. Everything was very clean and sanitary, and some of the hospitals had sun parlours which were well used, you can be sure.

Some of the men made toys and fancy articles such as button-hooks and paper-knives. They made the handles from empty shell cases or shrapnel or pieces of Zeppelin or anything else picked up at the front.

When they are getting well the men learn harness-making, mechanical drawing, telegraphy, gardening, poultry-raising, typewriting, book-keeping, and teach the nurses how to make canes out of shell cases, and rings of aluminium, and slippers and gloves out of blankets.

The nurses certainly work hard. They have more to do than they ought to, but they never complain, and are always cheerful and ready to play games when they have the time or read to some poilu. And their work is pretty dirty, too : I would not like to have to do it. They say there were lots of French Society ladies working as nurses, but you never heard much about Society or any talk about Lord Helpus or Count Whosis or pink teas or anything like that from these nurses.

## Gunner Depew

A few shells landed near our hospital while I was there, but no patient was hit. They knocked a shrine of Our Lady to splinters, though, and bowled over a big crucifix. The kitchen was near by, and it was just the chef's luck that he had walked over to our ward to see a pal of his when a shell landed plumb in the centre of the kitchen, and all you could see all over the barracks was stew.

That was a regular Eatless Day for us until they rigged up bogies and got some more dixies and mixed up some corn meal for us. The chef made up for it the next day, though. This chef was a great little guy. He was a *blessé* himself, and I guess his stomach sympathised with ours, for he certainly was the "Carry On Kid," as Butler called him, when it came to food. Most of the cooks were all right, anyway. At the field kitchens the cooks worry a lot if the men do not get enough food. They are always glad to see the boys again when they are withdrawn, and the first thing out of their mouths is, "Whom did you lose this time?" As a rule, they give the boys a specially fine meal before they go back to the front-line trenches, for, as the cook says, you do not know how many will ever get it again.

This Bill Butler I have mentioned was a great card. He was from Oklahoma, I think, and he must have been six foot four in his stockings. He was always getting up some kind of joke or writing funny pieces. He thought more Americans ought to get

into the scrap, so he wrote up a humorous advertisement which he said he would have printed on posters and stuck up on every bill board in the United States. He said it with a straight face, and the Frenchmen thought he meant it until another fellow and I translated it to them.

After a while Butler got so he could walk about, and he used to make regular trips to different wards. The men got to know him well, and they were always glad to see him. He would not be in a ward a minute before he had them all going.

He would come down the aisle between the cots imitating a man who drives ahead of a circus in a buggy in the small towns.

“Yore hosses! Yore hosses! Watch yore hosses—the elephants are now coming over the bridge!”

The Frenchmen did not know what it was about at all, but he said it in such a deep voice, and stuck out his chest, and “geed” up his horses, and pulled them up, and drove on again, and all this in such a funny way that he had them laughing all the time.

One of the nurses went to Paris on leave for three days and Bill got her to buy him a silk hat. When she came back with it he always wore it when he walked round the wards, and he could do all kinds of tricks with it. When he left they hung his hat on the wall and wrote his name under it.

## Gunner Depew

When Butler could get a bunch of *blessés* together he would sometimes act a whole play by himself. He got some cards and lettered them, "Villain," "Hero," "Heroine," "Giles the Faithful Servant," "Hobbs, a Villager," and so forth. After he had finished being Giles the Faithful Servant he would take off that sign and put on "Hero" or whatever came next, and on with the play. He surely was a card.

There was a Frenchman in the bed next to him who had the whole side of his face torn off. He told me he had been next to a bomber who had just lit a fuse, and as he did not think it was burning fast enough he blew on it. It burned fast enough after that, and there he was. He was the only *blessé* who did not seem to care for Butler's comedy : it hurt him to laugh.

There was a Belgian in one of the other wards whom I got to know pretty well, and he would often come over and visit me. He asked many questions about Dixmude, for he had had relatives there though he had lost track of them. He often tried to describe the house they had lived in so that I might tell him whether it was still standing or not, but I could not remember the place he spoke of. During our talks he told me about many atrocities. Some of the things he told me I had heard before, and some of them I heard of afterwards. Here are some things that he either saw or heard of from victims.



He said that when the Germans entered the town of St. Quentin they started firing into the windows as they passed along. First, after they had occupied the town, they bayoneted every working man they met with. Then they took about half of the children they could find and killed them with their musket butts. After this they marched the remainder of the children and the women to the square where they had lined up a row of male citizens against a wall. The women and children were told that if they moved they would all be shot. Another file of men was brought up and made to kneel in front of the other men against the wall.

The women and children began to beg for the lives of the men, and many of them were knocked on the head with gun butts before they stopped.

Then the Germans fired at the double rank of men. After three volleys there were eighty-four dead and twenty wounded. Most of the wounded they then killed with axes, but somehow three or four escaped by hiding under the bodies of others and playing dead, though the officers walked up and down firing their revolvers into the piles of bodies.

The next day the Germans went through the wine cellars and shot all the inhabitants they found hiding. A lot of people who had taken refuge in a factory overnight decided to come out with a white flag. They were allowed to think that the white flag would be respected, but no sooner had they all come out

than they were seized and the women publicly violated in the square, after which the men were shot. A paralytic was shot as he sat in his armchair, and a boy of fourteen was taken by the legs and pulled apart.

At one place a man was tied by the arms to the ceiling of his room and set on fire. His trunk was completely carbonized, but his head and arms were unburned. At the same place the body of a fifteen-year-old boy was found pierced by more than twenty bayonet thrusts. Other dead were found with their hands still in the air, leaning up against walls.

At another place the Germans shelled the town for a day and then entered and sacked it. The women and children were turned loose, without being allowed to take anything with them, and forced to leave the town. Nearly five hundred men were deported to Germany. Three, who were almost exhausted by hunger, tried to escape. They were bayoneted and clubbed to death. Twelve men who had taken refuge in a farm were tied together and shot in a mass. Another group of six were tied together and shot after the Germans had put out their eyes and tortured them with bayonets. Three others were brought before their wives and children and sabred.

The Belgian told me he was at Namur when the Germans began shelling it. The bombardment lasted the whole of August 21 and 22, 1914. They centred

their fire on the prison, the hospital, and the railway station. They entered the town at four o'clock in the afternoon of August 23. During the first twenty-four hours they behaved themselves, but on the 24th they began shooting at anyone they pleased, and set fire to different houses in five of the principal squares.

Then they ordered everyone to leave his house, and those who did not were shot. The others, about four hundred in all, were drawn up in front of the church close to the river bank. The Belgian said he could never forget how they looked.

"I can remember just how it was," he said. "There were eight men, whom I knew very well, standing in a row with several priests. Next came two good friends of mine named Balbau and Guillaume, with Balbau's seventeen-year old son, then two men who had taken refuge in a barn and had been discovered and blinded, then two other men whom I had never seen before.

"It was awful to see the way the women were crying—'Shoot me, too, shoot me with my husband.'

"The men were lined up on the edge of the hollow which runs from the high road to the bottom of the village. One of them was leaning on the shoulders of an old priest, and he was crying, 'I am too young—I can't face death bravely.'

"I couldn't bear the sight any longer. I turned my back to the road and covered my eyes. I heard the volley and the bodies falling. Then someone

cried, 'Look, they're all down!' But a few escaped."

This Belgian had escaped by hiding—he could not remember how many days—in an old cart filled with manure and rubbish. He had chewed old hides for food, had swum across the river, and hid in a mud bank for a week longer, and finally got to France.

He took it very hard when we talked about Dixmude, and I told him that the old church was just shot to pieces. He asked about a painting called the "Adoration of the Magi," and one of the other prisoners told us it had been saved and transported to Germany. If that is true, and they do not destroy it meanwhile, we will get it back, don't worry!

My wound was just a clean gunshot wound and not very serious, so, although it was not completely healed, they let me go after three weeks. But before I went I saw something that no man of us will ever forget. Some of them took vows, like the men of the Legion I have told about.

One of the patients was a German doctor who had been picked up in No Man's Land, very seriously wounded. He was given the same treatment as any of us, that is, the very best, but finally, the doctors gave him up. They thought he would die slowly, though it might take several weeks.

But there was a nurse there who took special interest in his case, and she stayed up day and night for some time and finally brought him through. The

case was very well known, and everybody said she had performed a miracle. He got better slowly.

Then a few weeks later, when he was out of danger and was able to walk, and it was only a question of time before he would be released from the hospital, this nurse was transferred to another hospital. Everybody knew her and liked her, and when she went round to say good-bye all the men were sorry and gave her little presents and wanted her to write to them. She was going to get a nurse she knew in the other hospital to turn her letters into English so that she could write to me. I gave her a ring I had made from a piece of shell case, but I guess she had hundreds of them at that.

But this German doctor would not say good-bye to her. That would not have made me sore, but it made this French girl feel very bad, and she began to cry. One of the French officers saw her and found out about the doctor, and the officer went up and spoke to the German. Then the French officer left, and the German called to the nurse and she went over to him and stopped crying. They talked for a little while, and then she put out her hands as if she was going to leave. He put out his hands, too, and took hold of hers. And then he twisted her wrists and broke them. We heard the snap.

There were men in that ward who had not been on foot since the day they came to the hospital, and one of them was supposed to be dying, but it is an

absolute fact that when we heard her scream there was not a man left in bed.

Now, I have heard people say that it is not the Germans we are fighting, but the Kaiser and his system. Well, it may be true that some of the Boche soldiers would not do these things if they did not have to : speaking for myself, I am not so sure of it.

But you take this doctor. Here he was, an educated man, who had been trained all his life to help people who were in pain, and not to cause it. And he was not where he would have to obey the Kaiser or any other German. And this nurse had saved his life.

So I do not see that there is any argument about it. He broke that girl's wrists because he wanted to ; that is all there is to it. Now I say this German doctor was a dirty cur and a scoundrel. But I say that he is a fair sample of most of the Germans I have met. And it is Germans of this kind that we are fighting—not merely the Kaiser.

It is like going to college. I have never been there, but I have heard some people say it did not do a man any good to go. But I have never heard a man who went there say that. Probably you have not been in Flanders or France, and maybe you think we are not fighting the German people, but only the Kaiser and his flunkys.

Well, nobody had better tell me that. Because I have been there and I have seen this. And I *know*.

## CHAPTER X

### HELL AT GALLIPOLI

AFTER I was discharged from the hospital I was ordered to report to my ship at Brest for sea duty.

The boys aboard the *Cassard* gave me a hearty welcome, especially Murray, who had come back after two weeks in the trenches at Dixmude. I was glad to see them, too, for, after all, they were garbies, and I always feel more at home with them than with soldiers. Then, it was pretty rough stuff at Dixmude, and after resting at the hospital I was keen on going to sea again.

The *Cassard* was in dry dock for repairs after her last voyage to the Dardanelles as convoy to the troopship *Dupleix*. Everything was being rushed to get her out as soon as possible, and crews were working day and night. There were other ships there, too—super-dreadnoughts, and dreadnoughts, and battleships, and armoured cruisers, all being overhauled.

We received and placed guns of newer design, filled the magazines with the highest explosives known to naval use, and generally made ready for a hard job. Our magazines were filled with shells for our big 12- and 14-inch guns. A 14-inch shell can tear a hole through the heaviest armour-plate at

12,000 yards, and will do more damage than you would think.

When we had coaled and got our stores aboard we dressed for action—or, rather, undressed. The decks were clear, hatch covers were bolted and davits folded down, furniture, chests, tables, chairs were sent ashore, and inflammable gear, like our rope hammocks, went overboard. You could not find a single wooden chair or table in the ward-room.

When a ship is cleared for action a shell bursting inside cannot find much to set afire, and if one bursts on deck there is nothing to burn but the wooden deck, and that is covered with steel plate.

Finally, we had roll call—all men present. Then we set sail for the Dardanelles as escort to the *Dupleix*, which had on board territorial and provincial French troops—Gascons, Parisians, Normans, Indo-Chinese, Spahis, Turcos—all kinds. When we messed we had to squat on the steel mess deck and eat from metal plates.

There had been a notice posted before we left that the Zeppelins had commenced sea raids, and we kept a live eye out for them. This news proved to be a fake, though, and we did not see a single cigar while we were out.

We made the trip to the Dardanelles without sighting an enemy craft, keeping in close touch with the *Dupleix*, and busy every minute preparing for action.



I was made gun captain and given charge of the starboard bow turret, mounting two 14-inch guns. I had my men at gun practice daily, and by the time we neared the Dardanelles, after five days, they were in pretty fair shape.

It was about five A.M. when we drew near Cape Helles and took stations for action. The *Dupleix* was in front of us. The batteries on the Cape opened upon us, and a few minutes later those at Kum Kaleh joined in.

As the *Dupleix* made for "V" Beach and prepared to land her troops we swung broadside on, raking their batteries as we did so, and received a shell, which entered through a gun port in the after turret and exploded. Some bags of powder stored there (where they should never have been) were fired, and the roof of the turret was just lifted off. It landed on deck, tilted up against the side of the turret.

On deck the rain of fire was simply terrific. Steel flew in all directions. It was smash, crash, slam-bang all the time, and I do not mind saying I never thought we would come out of it.

Some of the heavy armour-plate up forward was shot away, and after that the old *Cassard* looked to me more like a monitor than anything else. As we drew nearer the shore they began using shrapnel on us, and in no time at all our funnels were shot full of holes, and a sieve was watertight compared with them.

Naturally, we were not taking all this punishment

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without any compensation. Our guns were at it fast, and from the way the fire slackened in certain places we knew we were making it effective. My guns did for two enemy pieces that I know of, and perhaps for several others.

The French garbies were a good deal more excited in action than I thought they would be. They were dodging round below decks trying to miss the shrapnel that came aboard, shouting, swearing, singing—but fighting hard, at that. They stood the gaff just as well as any other garbies would, only in their own sweet way—which is noisy enough, believe me.

One of our seamen was hit one hundred and thirty times by fragments of shrapnel, so you can see what they were up against in the dodging line. A gun turret in action is not exactly the best place on earth for a nervous man, nor for one who likes his comfort. There is an awful lot of heat, and noise, and smell, and work, all the time in a fighting gun turret. But during an engagement I would rather be in a gun turret every time than between decks. At that, if anything does happen in a turret—it is good night sure for all, and no rain checks needed.

One of our junior lieutenants was struck by a fragment of shell as he was at his station behind the wheel-house, and a piece of his skull was driven into his brain. He was carried into my gun turret, but he would not let them take him to sick bay to have his wound dressed. There he sat, asking every now and

then how the fight was going, and then sort of dozing off for a while.

After about half an hour of action we put about and started away, still firing. As a parting slap on the back the Turks tore off one of our big gun turrets, and then away we went back to Brest with a casualty list of only fifteen. We did not have much trouble guessing that it was dry dock for us again.

We reached Brest after a quiet voyage, patching ourselves up where we could on the way, and again there was the rush work, day and night, to get into shape and do it over again. They turned us out in twelve days, and back we went to the Turks and their Hun assistants.

We were lucky getting inshore, only receiving a nasty smash astern, when the Turks had our range and landed two peaches before we got out. We nearly tore our rudder off getting away. But we had to come back right away, because we had carried quite a number of heavy guns from Brest and were given the job of running them ashore. It was day and night work, and a great job for fun, because, while you never knew when you would catch it, you had good reason to feel you would get lammed by a cute little shell or a dainty bit of shrapnel before the job was over.

Aboard ship it was deck work of course, and it was not much better there than ashore with the guns, because the enemy trenches were near the shore and

they amused themselves trying to pick us off whenever we showed on deck. I guess we were a regular shooting gallery for them, and some of our men thought they did not need all the practice they were getting, for quite a few of us acted as bulls' eyes.

But we did not mind the bullets so much. They make a clean wound or put you away entirely : shrapnel tears you up and can play all kinds of tricks with various parts of your body without killing you. As for shells—well, mincemeat is the word.

The Narrows were thick with mines, and a great deal of damage had been done there, so after a while the British detailed their Yarmouth trawlers to go in and sweep up. They had to go unprotected, of course, and they started off one night all serene.

Everything went well until they turned at the Narrows and started back. Then, before you could tell it, five or six searchlights were playing on one of the trawlers, and shells were splashing the water all over her. Both banks were simply banging away point-blank at them, and I never thought they would get back.

They did, though, but some of them had hardly enough men left to work ship. But that is like the Limeys. They will get back from anywhere while there is one man alive.

A chap aboard one of the trawlers said a shell went through the wheelhouse between the quarter-

master and himself, and all the Q.M. said was, "Blime, that tickled!"

"But I know their shooting was very bad," said the other chap to me. "Those Turks must have thought the flue was behind them."

Coming back from the Dardanelles, a gold-stripe sent for me and asked me whether I thought there were other ex-navy gunners in the States who would serve with the French. I told him the country was full of good gunners, and he wanted me to write to all I knew and get them to come over. He did not mean by this, and neither do I, that there were not good gunners in the French Navy, because there were—lots of them. But you can never have too many handy boys with the guns, and he was very anxious for me to get all I could. I had no way of reaching the ex-garbies whom I did know, so I had to pass on this opportunity to recruit by mail.

While we were in Brest I got permission to go aboard a submarine, and a petty officer showed me round. This was the first time I was in the interior of a sub., and I told the officer that I would like to take a spin in the tub myself. He introduced me to the commander, but the petty officer said he did not think they would let me stay aboard. I showed the commander my passport and talked to him for a while, and he said he would take me on their practice cruise two days later if the Old Man gave me written permission.

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So I hot-footed it back to the *Cassard*, and while I did not promise that I would get any American gunners for him in exchange for the written permission, he was free to think that if he wanted to. It seems as though he did take it that way, for he gave me a note to the sub. commander and sent him another note by messenger. I wanted Murray to go also, but the Old Man said one was enough.

So, two days later, I went aboard in the morning and had breakfast with the sub. crew, and a good breakfast it was, too. After breakfast they took stations, and the commander went up on the structure amidships, which was just under the conning-tower, and I squatted down on the deck beneath the structure.

Then the gas engines started up and made an awful racket and shook the old tub from stem to stern. I could tell that we had cut loose from the dock and were moving. After a while they shut off the gas engines and started the motors, and we began to submerge. When we were all the way under I looked through the periscope and saw a Dutch merchantman. We stayed under about half an hour, and then came back to the surface. One of the garbies told me later that this same sub. had gone out of control a few weeks before and kept diving and diving until she struck bottom. I do not know how many fathoms down it was, but it was farther than any commander would take a sub. if he

could help it. This garby said they could hear the plates cracking, and it was a wonder that they did not crumple up from the pressure, but she weathered it, pressure button and all, and in a quarter of an hour was on the surface. While on the surface they sighted smoke, submerged again, and soon over the horizon came eight battleships, escorted by Zepps and destroyers.

They tested their tubes before they got in range. Finally they let go. The first shot missed, but after that they got into it good, and the garby said all you could hear was the knocking of the detonated gun-cotton.

About five minutes later they sighted five destroyers, two on each bow, and one dead ahead. The sub. steered in at right-angle zigzags, and the destroyers stayed with their convoy. The sub. launched two torpedoes at less than a mile before diving to get away from the destroyers, and the garby said at least one of them was hit. These ships must have been some of the lucky ones that came down from the North Sea. The garby said he thought they were off the Dutch coast at the time, but he was not sure.

But this cruise that I was on was only a practice cruise, and we did not meet with any excitement in the short time that we were out.

## CHAPTER XI

### AT THE DARDANELLES

WHILE we were in Brest, after the second trip to the Dardanelles, the A. & H. liner *Kansan*, out of Baltimore—since torpedoed—and the British tramp *Welbeck Hall* were lying in the harbour. There were many Americans in the crews of each vessel, and I went to the Commandant of the port and asked him if we could have a baseball game on the drill ground.

He had heard about baseball—just heard about it—and he had the same idea of it as a sport that the average Frenchman gets. He said he would be glad to oblige, but did not I think it was too dangerous a sport for him to give his official sanction to? The men used masks and pads and large clubs, he understood, and threw hard balls at one another.

I told him that baseball was such a gentle sport that the old folks' homes in the States all had teams, and that they even played it indoors, and that most people thought that baseball was the reason Americans were so gentle and lamblike. He said he had not heard we were quite as harmless as I made out. But he gave in when I asked him whether he did not think fencing was more dangerous than baseball, and explained the game to him somewhat.



So we laid out a diamond on the parade ground, with rocks for the bases, and a ship's skillet for the home plate. Then the French got into it and arranged a programme of races, and a fencing match between one of their men and a German prisoner. The crew of the *Kansan* practised early one morning, and had pickets out so that no one could see them at work, but the *Welbeck Hall* men only played catch on deck.

We had a fine day for the game, and a mixed crowd out—French, civvies, soldiers, garbies, prisoners, the crews of the two ships, and Lord knows what. They wanted me to umpire, but I was too modest! So Dow, the first mate of the *Kansan*, was made umpire. He was manager of his team, too, but the *Welbeck Hall* men were good sports and let it go at that.

It was an awful game. I do not think that anybody knew what the score was, or how many innings they played, but after a time almost everybody admitted that the *Kansan* team had won.

Then they had the fencing, which excited the Frenchmen very much, and I must say they are good sports, because the German put it all over their man, and they did not protest at all, but applauded the German and gave him cigarettes enough to stock a store.

After that came the big event. One of the *Kansan's* crew was Shorty Mitchell, from Fairfield,

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Maine—the same man who shipped on the *Virginian* with us—and he was said to have been light-weight champion of the State at one time. The *Welbeck Hall* chap was a lad named Mike Sweeney. I do not know where he came from, but he was a good man with his fists. And the big event was a fight between these two. Dow got it up and refereed the bout.

All during the scrap there was a six-foot Kanaka or Hawaiian from the *Kansan* who kept shouting things at Dow and getting closer all the time to the ring. Now, Dow was a little fellow, and he had a tough bunch to handle. But he was game, if ever there was a game man. He always carried a rawhide whip with him, and when this Kanaka jumped into the ring and swore at him Dow let him have the whip right across the face. Some more men got into the ring about this time, and there was a riot for a while, with Dow cutting and slashing right and left. Finally, he got the ring cleared, but Mitchell and Sweeney were not in sight. I guess they had had enough.

So the Kanaka climbed back into the ring and challenged anybody there to a fight to a finish, bare fists or gloves. He certainly was a burly boy, if ever there was one. Nobody took him up, and he kept laughing at the audience, and calling them yellow, and swearing at them generally. I am not saying I offered to fight him, but somebody would

have had to—maybe it might have been me—if Dow had not thrown down his whip and put on the gloves. The Kanaka was so glad to get a crack at Dow he could hardly wait to have the gloves laced on him.

Then they went to it, and I wish you could have seen the beating that black boy took. Dow just pasted him all over the place. He would get inside the Kanaka's guard and put away a few body blows, and then out again, leaving a few on the jaw as souvenirs as he went.

It looked funny, though, for Dow and the Kanaka stacked up like Mutt and Jeff for size. The black boy was bleeding like a stuck pig at the mouth and nose, but he would not yell "Enough!" and Dow finally rocked him to sleep with a pile driver on the chin. I never saw a prettier fight, because the black boy was no clown with his fists himself. But Dow was certainly a great little scrapper and a fine sport.

Also, while we were in dry dock at Brest, I went aboard the *France IV*, one of the eight hospital ships that went to and fro between Salonica and Tunis. The ship was fitted up to carry about nine hundred patients, and I never saw a better equipped hospital anywhere—X-ray apparatus and glass tubes and bulbs everywhere.

The saloon deck and the dining saloon were filled with white beds, and the lower decks were fitted up with berths. The staterooms—all white—were filled

with surgical dressings, supplies and clothing of various kinds.

There is a priest aboard each of the hospital ships, and a picked staff of doctors and nurses. When patients arrive on board, their knapsacks are taken from them and stored on deck so that there will not be any danger of infection below in the wards. Then a little card is pinned on each man's bed coat, telling where he is wounded or what disease he has. Those who can walk, even on crutches, are allowed on deck as much as they please in fair weather, and they gather around on the forecastle deck or amidships, out of the wind, and compare wounds and talk symptoms just like any other batch of sanatorium patients. Each man has his own water-bottle and drinking cup.

Of course, some of them die at sea, and these are rolled up in a tarpaulin, sewed, weighted—then, over the side, after the priest has read the service. I guess it is good for the patients who can walk to be out in the air on deck, but I wondered what the lads on crutches would do in a heavy sea. It must take some hobbling to keep up.

I made twelve trips to the Dardanelles in all, the *Cassard* acting generally as convoy to troop ships; but one trip was much like another, and I cannot remember all the details, so I will give only certain incidents of the voyages that you might find interesting. We never put into the Dardanelles without

being under fire—but besides saying so, what is there to write about in that? It was interesting enough at the time, though, you can take it from me!

Coming up to “V” Beach on our third trip to the Dardanelles, the weather was as nasty as any I have ever seen. The rain was sweeping along in sheets—great big drops, and driven by the wind in regular volleys. You could see the wind coming, by the line of white against a swell where the drops hit.

As we rounded the point the seas got choppiier, and there were cross-currents bucking the ship from every angle, it seemed. You could not see two hundred yards away, the rain was so thick, and the combers were breaking over our bows three a minute. The coast here is pretty dangerous, so we went in very slowly, and had the sounding-line going until its whir-r-r-r sounded louder than a machine-gun in action.

I was on the starboard bow at the time, and had turned to watch some garbies poking at the scuppers to drain the water off the deck. But the scuppers had been plugged, and they were having a hard time of it. The officer on the bridge, in oilskins, was walking up and down, wiping off the business end of his telescope, and trying to dodge the rain. All of the garbies but one left the scuppers on the starboard side and started across decks to port. The other chap kept on fooling around the scuppers.

Then I saw a big wave coming for us, just off the starboard bow, and I grabbed hold of a stanchion and took a deep breath and held on. When my head showed above water again the other end of the wave was just passing over the place where the garbies had been, and the officer was shouting: "Un homme à la mer!" He shouted before the man really was overboard because he saw that the wave would get him.

I rushed to the port bow and looked back, for the wave had carried him clear across the decks, and saw the poor lad in the water trying to fend himself off from the ship's side. But it was no go, and the port propeller blades just carved him into bits.

On our homeward voyage we received word again, by wireless, that there were Zeppelins at sea. We did not believe this, and it proved to be untrue. But there were other stories, and taller ones, told us by one of the wireless operators that some of the garbies believed. This chap was the real original Baron Munchausen when it came to yarning, and for a while he had me going, too. He would whisper some startling tale to us and make us promise not to tell, as he had picked it from some other ship's message, and the Old Man would spread-eagle him if he found it out. They probably would have logged him, at that, if they had known he was filling us full of wind the way he did.

He told me one time that Henry Ford had in-

vented something or other for locating subs. miles away, and also another device that would draw the sub. right up to it and swallow it whole. He had a lot of other yarns that I cannot remember, but I did not believe him because I saw he was picking out certain men to tell certain yarns to—that is, spinning them where they would be more sure of being believed, and not just spinning them anywhere.

So I got pretty tired of his stuff after a while, and when we put out from Brest, on the fourth voyage, I got this fellow on deck in rough weather, and began talking to him about the chap who had gone overboard the time before and had been cut up by the propeller. I pretended that, of course, he knew all about it—that the Old Man had had this garby pushed overboard because he was too free with his mouth. But this did not seem to do any good, so I had to think up another way.

When we were out two days I got hold of our prize liar again. I reasoned that he would be superstitious, and I was right. I said that, of course, he knew that a ship could not draw near Cape Helles and get away again unless at least one man was lost, or that, if it did get away, there would be many casualties aboard. I said it had always been that way, and claimed that the Old Man had pushed the garby overboard because someone had to go. I said on our other trips no one had been sacrificed, and that was the reason we had suffered so much,

and that the Old Man had been taken to task by the French Minister of the Navy. I told him that the Old Man would pick on whatever garby he thought he could best spare.

That was all I had to tell him. Either he thought the Old Man knew of his yarning, or else he did not think himself of much account, for he disappeared that very watch, and we did not see him again until we were on the homeward voyage, and a steward happened to dig into a provision hold. There was our lying friend with a lifebelt on, another under his head, and the bight of a rope round his waist, fast asleep. Why he had the rope I do not know, but he was scared to death and thought we were going to chuck him overboard at once. I think he must have told the officers everything because I noticed them looking pretty hard at me—or, at least, I thought I did; maybe it was my conscience, if I may brag of having one—and I thought one of our lieutenants was just about to grin at me several times, but we never heard any more about it, or any more yarns from our wireless friend.

The fourth voyage was pretty rough, too. The old girl would stick her nose into the seas, and many times I thought she would forget to come up. We had a lot of sand piled up against the wheelhouse, and after we dived pretty deep one time, and bucked out slowly, there was not a grain of sand left. It looked as if the sea was just kidding us, for we were



almost into quiet water, and here it had just taken one sea aboard to clean up the sand we had carried all the way from Brest.

During the whole voyage you could not get near the galley, which was where our wireless friend hung out when he could. The pans and dixies on the wall stood straight out when the ship pitched, and several heavy ones came down on a cook's head while he was sitting under them during a very heavy sea. That made him superstitious, too, and he disappeared and was not found for two days. But he was a landsman and not used to heavy weather.

When we got to the Gallipoli Peninsula the fifth time our battle fleet and transports lay off the Straits. We could not reach the little harbour on the Turkish coast, but the whole fleet felt happy and fairly confident of victory. We lay off Cape Helles, and it was there we received the news that submarines were lying round Gibraltar. Then they were reported off Malta. We got the news from British trawlers and transports. Our officers said the subs. could not reach the Dardanelles without putting in somewhere for a fresh supply of fuel, and that the Allied fleets were on the look-out at every place where the subs. might try to put in. But they got there just the same.

Then the British super-dreadnought *Queen Elizabeth*, "The Terror of the Turks," came in. She left England with a whole fleet of cruisers and

destroyers, and all the Limeys said: "She'll get through. Nothing will stop her."

One of the boys aboard her told me he had no idea the Dardanelles would be as hot a place as he found it was. "Blime," he said, "what with dodging shells and submarines, you cawn't 'elp but run on to a bloomin' mine! Hi don't mind tellin' you," he said, "that Hi was seared cold at first. And then Hi thinks of what 'Oly Joe [the chaplain] told us one service. 'Hin times of dynger look hupwards,' 'e says. So Hi looks hupwards, and, blime, hif there wasn't a bally 'plane a-droppin' bombs hon us! 'What price hupward looks, 'Oly Joe?' I sings out, but he weren't nowheres near. Blarst me, there weren't nowhere you could look without doin' yer bloomin' heye a dirty trick."

When the *Queen Elizabeth* entered the Dardanelles the Turkish batteries on both shores opened right on her. They had ideal positions, and they were banging away in great style. And the water was simply thick with mines, and, for all anybody knew, with subs.

Yet the old Lizzie just sailed right along with her band upon the main deck playing, "Everybody's Doing It." It made you feel shivery down the spine, and, believe me, they got a great hand from the whole fleet.

They say her Old Man told the boys he was going to drive right ahead, and that if the ship was sunk

he would know that the enemy was somewhere in the vicinity. Well, they were headed right, but they never got past the Narrows. They stuck until the last minute, though, and those who went up, went up with the right spirit. "Are we downhearted?" they would yell. "No!" And they were not, either. They did not brag when they gave the Turks beans, and they did not grouch when they saw that their Red Caps had made mistakes. Their motto was, "Try Again," and they tried day after day. I do not know much about the history of armies, but I do not believe there ever was an army like that of the Allies in the Gallipoli campaign, and I do not think any other army could have done what they did. I take off my hat to the British Army and Navy after that.

It was hotter than I have ever known it to be elsewhere, and there was no water for the boys ashore but what the navy brought to them—sometimes a pint a day, and often none at all. The Turks had positions that you could not expect any army to take; were well supplied with ammunition, and were used to the country and climate. Most of the British Army were green troops. It was the Anzacs' first campaign.

They were wonderful boys, those Australians and New Zealanders. Great big men, all of them, and finely built, and they fought like devils. It was hand-to-hand work half the time; hardly any sleep,

no water, sometimes no food. They made a mark there at Gallipoli that the world will have to go some to beat.

Our boys were on the job, too. We held our part of the works until the time came for everybody to quit, and it was no picnic. The French should be very proud of the work their navy did in the Dardanelles.

On our sixth trip I saw H.M.S. *Goliath* get it. She was struck three times by torpedoes and then shelled. The men were floundering in the water with shrapnel cutting the waves all round them. Only a hundred odd of her crew were saved.

One day off Cape Helles, during our seventh spell at the Dardanelles, we sighted a sub. periscope just about dinner-time. The *Prince George* and a destroyer sighted the sub. at the same time, and the *Prince George* let go two rounds before the periscope disappeared, but did not hit the mark. Transports, battleships and cruisers were thick around there, all at anchor, and it was a great place for a sub. to be.

In no time at all the destroyers breezed out with their tails in the air, throwing a smoke screen round the larger ships. They hunted high and low all over the spot where she had been sighted and all around it, thinking to ram it or bring it to the surface so we could take a crack at it. All the rest of the fleet—battleships and transports—weighed anchor at once and steamed ahead at full speed.

It was a great sight. Any new ship coming up would have thought that the British and French navies had gone crazy. We did not have any fixed course, but were steaming as fast as we could in circles and half circles, and dashing madly from port to starboard. We were not going to allow that sub. to get a straight shot at us, but we almost rammed ourselves doing it. It was a case of chase-tail for every ship in the fleet.

But the sub. did not show itself again that day, and we anchored again. That night, while the destroyers were around the ships, we slipped our cables and patrolled the coast along the Australian position at Gaba Tepe, but we did not anchor.

The following day the *Albion* went ashore in the fog, south of Gaba Tepe, and as soon as the fog lifted the Turks let loose and gave it to her hot. A Turkish ship came up and, with any kind of gunnery, could have raked her fore and aft, but the Turks must have been pretty shy of gun sense, for they only got in one hit before they were driven off by H.M.S. *Canopus*, which has made such a fine record in this war.

Then the *Canopus* pulled in close to the *Albion*, got a wire hawser aboard, and attempted to tow her out under a heavy fire, but as soon as she started pulling the cable snapped. The crew of the *Albion* were ordered aft, and jumped upon the quarter deck to try to shift the bow off the bank. At the same

time the fore turret and the fore 6-inch guns opened up a hot fire on the Turkish positions, to lighten the ship and shift her by the concussions of the guns. For a long time they could not budge her. Then the *Canopus* got another hawser aboard, and with guns going and the crew jumping and the *Canopus* pulling, the old *Albion* finally slid off, and both ships backed into deep water with little harm done to either. Then they returned to their old anchorages.

At Cape Helles everyone was wide awake. We were all on the look-out for subs., and you could not find one man napping. Anything at all passed for a periscope—tins, barrels, spars. Dead horses generally float in the water with one foot sticking up, and we gave the alarm many a time when it was only some old nag on his way to Davy Jones's Locker.

On the *Cassard* the Old Man posted a reward of fifty francs for the first man who sighted a periscope. This was a good idea, but, believe me, he would have had trouble in making the award, for every man on the ship would be sure to see it at the same time. We were all on deck all the time. Each man felt sure he would be the man to get the reward. The 14-pounders were loaded and ready for action at a second's notice. But the reward was never claimed.

During our eighth trip off Cape Helles I was amidships in the galley when I heard our two 14-pounders go off almost at the same time. Everybody ran for his station. Going up the main deck to

my turret a man told me it was a sub. on the port bow, but I only caught a glimpse of the little whirlpool where her periscope submerged. I do not know why she did not let loose a torpedo at us. The officers said she was trying to make the entrance to the Dardanelles, and came up blind among the ships and was scared off by our guns, but I thought we had just escaped by the skin of our teeth. Later, our destroyers claimed to have sighted her off Gaba Tepe.

It was probably the same sub. that launched a torpedo at H.M.S. *Vengeance*, but missed her. The *Vengeance* was cruising at the time.

At noon we were at mess when one of the boys yelled, "She's hit," and we all rushed on deck. There was the British ship *Triumph* torpedoed and listing to starboard. She was ready to turn over in a few minutes. One battleship is not supposed to go to the assistance of another one that has been torpedoed, because the chances are the sub. is still in the neighbourhood, lying for the second ship with another torpedo. But one of the British trawlers went to the assistance of the *Triumph* to pick up the crew.

We could see the crew jumping into the water. Then we breezed out towards the horizon full speed ahead. All about the *Triumph* was a cloud of black smoke, but when we looked through the glasses we could see she was going down. Then our guns began to bombard the Turkish positions, and I had

to get busy. When I saw the *Triumph* again she was bottom up. She must have floated upside down for almost half an hour; then she went under as though there were somebody on the bottom pulling her.

When she went our Old Man banged his telescope on the bridge-rail, and swore at the Huns and Turks and broke his telescope lens to bits. About fifty from the *Triumph* were lost.

It was decided that the place was too hot for us with that sub. running loose, and when they reported, that afternoon, that she was making her way south from Gaba Tepe to Cape Helles, all of the fleet but the *Majestic* got under way, and the *Majestic* was the only ship left off the Cape.

They said the *Majestic* was then the oldest of the ships in that campaign, but she was the pride of the British fleet just the same. She was torpedoed off Cape Helles later, when there were a number of men-of-war off the Cape. The sea was crowded with men, swimming and drowning. I saw a life-boat crowded with men and so many others hanging to her that they began to pull her under. Of their own accord the men in the water let go to save those in the boat. Most of them were drowned.

The *Majestic* listed so that the men could not stand on deck, and the sides were covered with men hanging on to ropes, and not knowing whether to jump into the sea or not. We lowered all our life-



boats and steam launches, and so did the other ships. We picked up a number of the crew and were pretty close to the *Majestic* when she went down like a rock. As she went down she turned over, and a garby ran along her side to the ram at her bow and got on it without even being wet. A boat picked him up off the ram, which stuck out of the water after the ship had ceased to settle.

She had torpedo nets on her sides, and many of the crew were unable to get clear of the nets, and went down with her. Quite a lot were caught below decks, and had no possible chance to escape. There was a big explosion as she went under—probably the boilers bursting. Thousands of troops on shore and thousands of sailors on the ships saw the final plunge, and it was a sight to remember. When the ship started to go the Old Man rushed back to his cabin, got the signal book and destroyed it. Also, he saved the lives of two of his men.

We gave dry clothes and brandy and coffee to the Limeys we rescued, and though they had just come through something pretty tough they were very calm and cool, and started talking right away about what ships they would probably be assigned to next.

## CHAPTER XII

### A PAL CRUCIFIED

WHEN we got to "V" Beach on my next trip the weather was really fine, but it did not please us much, for as soon as we got in range the enemy batteries opened upon us, and the shell fire was heavier than any we had been in before, though not more effective. We drew in on a bright morning about half-past five or six with our convoy, the troopship *Champagne* ahead of us, and going slowly, sounding all the way.

At this part of the shore there is a dock about a mile and a half long, running back into the country and terminating in a road. The *Champagne* was making for this dock, sounding as she went. Suddenly, when she was within five hundred yards of the shore, I saw her swing round and steer in a crazy fashion. We began asking each other what the devil was the matter with her, but we learned afterwards that her rudder had been torn off, though we never found out how, nor do I think anyone ever knew.

Then she went aground, with her stern towards the shore, and listed over to port. You could see

different articles rolling out and down the side. Then her back broke. The quarter-deck was crowded with men half dressed, with lifebelts on, jumping over the side or climbing down. There was an explosion, and a cloud of black smoke broke over us, and for a while I thought I was blinded.

All the time the shells were raining in on us and on the *Champagne*. When I could see again I saw the men on the *Champagne* climbing down the starboard, or shore side. One chap was going down, hand over hand, along a stanchion, when another fellow above him let go and slid right down on him. The first man fell about thirty feet, landing in the water with his neck doubled under him. Our lifeboats and launches were out picking up survivors.

Those who got safely over the side started to swim ashore, but when they had gone only a little way they found they could wade in. When the water was only up to their waists they came upon barbed wire entanglements, and not a man got ashore that way but was scratched and clawed and mangled horribly. Some of them that I saw afterwards were just shredded along the sides of their bodies like coco-nuts. A great many of them, though, were killed by shrapnel while they were in the water.

On board the *Cassard* our guns had been busy all the time, and it was not long before we put one enemy battery out of commission. We had suf-

ferred a bit, too, but not enough to worry us. There were about 3,000 men on the *Champagne*, I think. The ship was just a mass of wreckage.

They called for a landing party from the *Cassard*, and officers asked for volunteers for trench duty. I was not very keen about going, because I had been in trenches at Dixmude, and I knew how pleasant they were—but I volunteered, and so did Murray. We went ashore in our boats under a heavy fire. Twelve men were killed in the lifeboat in which I was. I escaped without a scratch.

We were mustered up on shore and volunteers were called for for sentry duty. Murray volunteered. If he had only gone on with the rest of us he might have come through. After a short wait we were given the order to advance. The firing became heavier about this time, so we went at the double. We had not gone very far before we had a gruesome surprise.

The front line was running over what appeared to be good solid ground when they broke through and fell into trenches thirty to forty feet deep. These trenches had been dug, covered over with  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch boards and then with dirt, and were regular man-traps. Sharp stakes were sticking out of the parapet and paradoss, and at the bottom were more stakes and rocks and barbed wire.

We were advancing with bayonets fixed and arms at the carry, so, when the first line fell, and some of

the second, the boys of the third line came running up, and in the scramble that followed, many of the chaps in the first two lines were bayoneted by their comrades. I was in the third line, but I was lucky enough to pull up in time and did not fall in. You could not look down into that trench after you had seen it once; it was too sickening. Our casualties were sent back to the ship. One boat was sunk by a shell and all the men were lost.

We remained where we were, scratching out shallow trenches for ourselves, finding what natural cover there was, and otherwise getting ready for the night, which was near. It began to rain and we could hardly keep any fires going, because we had to shelter them from the shore side, so that the enemy might not spot us, and the wind was from the sea. It was certainly miserable that night.

Every now and then we would stand by to repel an attack, whether it was a real one or not, and we were under fire all the time. It seemed as if morning would never come. The sand was full of fleas—great big boys—and they were as bad as any cooties I have ever had in Dixmude.

The morning came at last, and I was detailed with a fatigue party to go to the beach where we had landed stores. When we got down to the docks I missed Murray and asked where he was. They said he had been missing from his post not more than an hour from the time we started.

I left my fatigue party, without orders, and joined in the hunt for Murray. There were men searching all along the docks and on the shore to each side. Finally, I saw a number of men collect round a storehouse at the farther end of the docks, on the shore side. I ran up to them.

There was poor old Murray. They were just taking him down. He had been crucified against the wall of the storehouse. There was a bayonet through each arm, one through each foot, and one through his stomach. One of the garbies fainted when he had to pull one of the bayonets out. They had hacked off his right hand at the wrist, and taken his identification disc. I lay this to the German officers more than to the Turks.

I do not know just what I did after this. But it changed me all through, and I was not like my usual self during the rest of the time.

It was still raining when we started on our way to the front line. Along the road were numbers of troops feeding, and among them Indian troops on sentry duty. They looked like a bunch of frozen turnips, cool and uncomfortable. We were close enough to make the roar of the cannonading seem intolerably loud, and could see the bursting shells, particularly those from the British ships.

Then we came across some Turkish prisoners who were sheltering in an old barn, I guess it was, and we stopped for shelter and rest. They told us that their

troops were very tired from long fighting, but that they had plenty of men. They said a couple of shells had dropped about a hundred yards from the barn just before we came, so we knew the batteries were trying to get our range, and we did not stay any longer, but went away from there and on our road.

About 500 yards farther on we came to some ruins, and when we went inside we found fifty or sixty of our boys cooking and sleeping and not giving a thought to the shells or shrapnel. The mules outside were tearing away at the hay as though there never had been a war in the world. There was no shell made that could make them budge from that hay unless it hit them.

Then along came a cart making a lot of racket. One of the fellows in it had half of his face shot away and was all bandaged up, but he was trying to sing and laugh just as the rest were doing. They were Anzacs and were pretty badly shot up.

The word "Anzac," as you know, is made from the initials of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. They had a regular town called Anzac on the Peninsula. At Suvla Bay and around Gaba Tepe the Anzacs got farther into the Turkish lines than any other unit of the Allied armies. They were wonderful fighters.

By this time the Turks were making an attack, and all you could see to the front was one long line of smoke and spouting earth. Then our guns

started, and the noise was deafening. It was worse than in the turrets aboard ship during an engagement. My head rang for days after we left the Dardanelles.

By and by the Turks got a better idea of our range, and the shells were falling pretty close to us, but finally we tore in with the 14-inch navals and ripped up three of their batteries. In the lull that followed we made good time and reached our front-line positions at Sedd-el-Bahr during the afternoon.

Next morning we made our first attack. I had had a bad night, thinking about Murray, and when the time came there never was a chap more glad to charge and get a chance at the enemy with a bayonet than I was.

We attacked according to a regular programme. Time cards were issued to the officer of each section so that we should work exactly with the barrage. To be ahead of, or behind the time card would mean walking into our own barrage. The time of attack is called Zero—that is the minute when you leave the trench. Some of the Anzacs said it meant when your feet got the coldest, but I do not think they suffered very much with trouble in the feet—not when they were advancing, anyway.

The time card might read something like this: First Wave, Zero, advance, rapid walk, barrage twenty-five in ten seconds, take first trench, 0:20; second wave, same as the first, pass first trench,



0:23, take second trench, 0:35. The third wave is ordered to take the third trench, and so on, for as many lines as the enemy is entrenched. The other waves might be instructed to occupy Hill 7, 12:08, or dig in behind rock, 12:45. Here Zero is understood, the first figures standing for minutes and the others for seconds. It might take several hours to carry out the programme, but everything is laid out to an exact schedule.

I was in the sixth line of the third wave of attack, and Zero was 4.30 A.M. Whistles were to be the signal for Zero, and we were to walk to the first-line Turkish trench. As we came out our barrage fire would be bursting fifty yards ahead of us, and would lift twenty-five yards every ten seconds. Our stunt was to take advantage of it without walking into it.

No one man can see all of an attack, which may extend over miles of ground, but during the three weeks I was in the trenches on the Gallipoli Peninsula we made four grand attacks and many minor ones, so I know in a general way what they are like. Each wave is organised like the others. First come three lines of what you might call grenadiers, though they are not picked for size as the old King's Grenadiers used to be. They are deployed in skirmish formation, which means that every man is three yards from the next. They are armed only with grenades, but, you can take it from me, that is enough! Behind them come two lines, also in skir-

mish formation, and armed with machine-guns and grenade rifles. The first men on the left carry machine-guns, then come three rifle grenadiers, and then another machine-gun, and so on down the length of the line. After these come two lines of riflemen with fixed bayonets.

Then come the trench cleaners, or moppers-up, as we called them. They were some gang, believe me. Imagine a team of Rugby players spread out in two lines—only with hundreds of men in the team instead of eleven, and each man a Samson, capable of handling a baby grand piano single-handed. These fellows were armed with everything you could think of, and a whole lot more that you could not dream about in a nightmare. It used to remind me of a trial I saw in New York once, where the police had raided a thieves' den and had all their weapons in the courtroom as exhibits.

The moppers-up were armed with sticks, clubs, shillelaghs, black-jacks, two-handed cleavers, axes, trench knives, poniards, up-to-date tomahawks, brass knuckle-dusters, slung shots—anything that was ever invented for crashing a man with, I guess, except firearms. These knock-down-drag-out artists follow the riflemen very closely. Their job was to take care of all the Turks who could not escape and would not surrender.

There are lots of men in any army who will not surrender, but I think probably there were more

Turks of that gameness than men in most other armies. I have heard that it is part of their religion that a man, if he dies fighting, goes to a very specially fancy heaven, with plenty to eat and smoke. And I suppose if he surrenders, they believe he will be put in the black gang, stoking for eternity down below. It was awfully hot at the Dardanelles, and I guess the Turks did not want it any hotter, for very few of them ever surrendered, and the trench cleaners had a lot to do. Their job is really important, for it is dangerous to have groups of the enemy alive and kicking about in their trenches after you have passed. Almost every prisoner we took was wounded.

The one thing that I do not like to have people ask me is, "How does it feel to kill a man?" and I think the other boys feel as I do about it. It is not a thing you like to talk about, or think about either. But this time at "V" Beach, when we got past the first and second Turk trenches and were at work on the third, I do not mind saying that I was glad whenever I slipped my bayonet into a Turk, and more glad when I saw another one coming. I guess I saw red all right. Each time I thought, "Maybe you are the one who did for poor old Murray." And I could see Murray as he looked when they took him down from the storehouse wall. Then I would stick another one.

The others from the *Cassard* were red-hot, too,

and they went at the 'Turks in great style. There was nothing to complain about in the way they fought, but I wished that we had had a few more boys from the Foreign Legion with us. I think we would have gone clear through to Constantinople.

But the 'Turks were not as bad as Fritz. They were just as good or better as fighters, and a whole lot whiter. Often, when we were frying in the trenches and not a drop of water was to be had, something would land on the ground near us and there would be a water-bottle full. Sometimes they almost bombarded us with bottles. Then, too, they would not fire on the Red Cross as the Germans do : they often held their fire when we were out picking up our wounded. Several times they dragged our wounded as close as they could to the barbed wire that we might find them easier.

After Murray died I got to thinking a lot more than I used to, and though I did not have any presentiment exactly, still I felt as though I might "get it," too, which was something I had never thought much about before. I used to think about my grandmother also, when I had time, and about Brown. I used to wonder what Brown was doing and wish we were together. But I could remember my grandmother smiling, and that helped some. I guess I was lonely, to tell the truth. I did not know the other garbies well, and the only one left that I was really very friendly with got his soon afterwards,

though not as bad as Murray. And then there was no one that I was really chummy with. That would not have bothered me at all before Murray died.

The other lad I was chummy with was named Philippe Pierre. He was about eighteen and came from Bordeaux. He was a very cheerful fellow, and he and Murray and I used to be together a lot. He felt almost as bad about Murray as I did, and you could see that it changed him a great deal, too. But he was still cheerful most of the time.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LIMEYS, ANZACS, AND POILUS

ONE night, while we were expecting to attack, the word was passed down the line to have the wire-cutters ready, and to use bayonets only for the first part of the attack, for we were to try to take the first enemy trench by surprise. The first trench was only about eighty yards away. Our big guns opened up, and at Zero we climbed out and followed the curtain of fire, too closely, it seemed to me.

But the barrage stopped too soon, as it does sometimes, and there were plenty of Turks left. We were half-way across when they saw us, and they began pounding away at us very hard. They pounded at us as we came on until we were given the order to retire, almost as we were on them—what was left of us.

As we turned and started back the Turks rushed out to counter-attack us, the first of them busy with bombs. Then I tripped over something and rolled round a while, and then saw it was Philippe Pierre. His left leg was dangling, cloth and flesh and all shot away, and the leg hanging to the rest of him by a shred. Two or three of our men, who were on their

way back to our trenches, tripped over me as I tried to get up, and then a shell exploded near by, and I thought I had got it sure, but it was only the rocks thrown up by the explosion.

Finally, I was able to stand up. So I slung my rifle over one shoulder and got Philippe Pierre upon the other, with his body from the waist up hanging over my back, so that I could hold his wounded leg on, and started back. There were only one or two of our men left between the trenches. Our machine-guns were at it hard, and the Turks were firing and bombing at full speed.

I had not gone more than two or three paces when I came across another of our men, wounded in several places, and groaning away at a great rate. Philippe Pierre was not saying a word, but the other chap did enough for the two of them. One wounded man was all I could manage, with my rifle and pack, over the rough ground and the barbed wire I had to go through. So I told this fellow, whose name I cannot remember—I never did know him very well—that I would come back for him, and went on. I almost fell several times, but managed to get through safely and rolled over our parapet with Philippe Pierre. They started the lad back in a stretcher right away. When I saw him again he gave me a little box as a souvenir, but I have lost it.

The Turks had not got very far with their counter-attack, because we were able to get our barrage

going in time to check them. But they were still out in front of their trenches when I started back after the other garby. I was not exactly afraid as I crawled along searching for my man, but I was very thirsty and nervous for fear our barrage would begin again or the machine-guns cut loose. After what seemed a long time I came upon a wounded man, but he was not the one I was after. I thought about a bird in the hand, and was just starting to pick this chap up when a shell burst almost on us and knocked me two or three feet away. It is a wonder it did not kill both of us, but neither of us was hurt. I thought the fire would get heavier then, so I dragged the other chap into one of two holes made by the shell. Some pieces of the shell had stuck into the dirt in the hole, and they were still hot. Also, there was a sort of gas there that hung around for several minutes, but it was not very bad.

The man began talking to me, and he said it was an honour to lie on the field of battle with a leg shot off and dead men piled all about you, and some not dead but groaning. He told me I would soon be able to bear the groaning, though I had not said I minded it, or anything about it. Then he said again what an honour it was, and asked if I had a drink for him. I had not had any water all day, and I told him so, but he kept on asking for it all the same. Some of the Turkish bombers must have sneaked up pretty



close to our lines, for when I looked out of the hole towards our line, and a shell burst near them, I could see a Turk coming towards us. We played dead then, but I had my bayonet ready for him in case he had seen us and should decide to come up to the hole. Evidently he had not, for when he got near the hole, he steered to the side and went round.

The other garby was cheerful when he was not asking for water, but you could see he was going fast. So we sat there in the hole, and he died. Shortly afterwards the fire slackened a little, and I got out and started towards our lines. But I remembered about the other wounded man I had passed when I was carrying Philippe Pierre, so I begun hunting for him, and after a long time I found him. He was still alive. His chest was all smashed in and he was badly cut up about the neck and shoulders. I picked him up and started back, but ran into some barbed wire and had to go round. I was pretty tired by this time and awfully thirsty, and I thought if I did not rest a little bit I could never win through. I was so tired and nervous that I did not care much whether I did get back or not, and the wounded garby was groaning all the time.

So when I thought the shells were coming pretty thick again I got into a shell-hole, and it was the same one I had left not long before. The dead garby was there just as I had left him.

The wounded one was bleeding all over, and my

clothes were soaked with blood from the three men, but most of all from him. There was some of my own blood on me, too, for when I was knocked down by the shell my nose bled, and kept on bleeding for a long time, but, of course, that was nothing compared with the bleeding of the others.

The worst of all was that he kept groaning for water, and it made me thirstier than I had been, even. But there was not a drop of water anywhere, and I knew it was no use searching any bodies for flasks. So we just had to stick it out. Pretty soon the wounded man quit groaning and was quiet, and I knew he was going to die, too. It made me mad to think that I had not been of any help in carrying these two men, but if I had gone on with either of them it would have been just the same—they would have died, and probably I would have got it, too. When I argued it out this way, I quit worrying about it, only I wished the fire would let up.

So the other man died, and there were two of them in the hole. I read the numbers on their identification discs when shells burst near enough so that I could see them, and, after a while, I got back to our lines and rolled in. I could not remember the numbers or the names by that time, but a working party got them, along with others, so it was all right.

My clothes were a mess, as I have said, and I was so tired I thought I could sleep for a week, but I

could not stand it in my clothes any longer. It was absolutely against regulations, but I took off all my clothes—the blood had soaked through to the skin—and wrapped myself in nothing but air and went right to sleep. I did not sleep very well, but woke up every now and then and thought I was in the hole again.

During the night they brought up water, but I was asleep and did not know it. They did not wake me, but two men saved my share for me, though usually in a case like that it was everybody for himself and let the last man go dry. You could not blame them, either, so I thought it was pretty decent of these two to save my share for me. I believe they must have had a hard time keeping the others off it, to say nothing of themselves, for there really was not more than enough for one good drink all round. It tasted better than anything I have ever drunk. Go dry for twenty-four hours in the hottest weather you can find, do a night's work such as I have described, and come to in the morning with a tin cup full of muddy water being handed to you, and you will know what I mean and what nectar means.

At Gaba Tepe there were steep little hills, with quarries in between them, and most of the prisoners we took were caught in the quarries. We found lots of dead Turks under piles of rock, where our guns had battered the walls of the quarries down on them.

We were fighting about this part of the country

one time when we saw three motor trucks disappear over the side of a hill going across country. The detachment from the *Cassard* was sent over on the run, and we came upon the Turks from those trucks and several others just after they had got out and were starting ahead on foot. We captured the whole crew—I do not know how many in all. They were reinforcements on their way to a part of their line that we were battering very hard, and by capturing them we helped the Anzacs a great deal, for they were able to get through for a big gain.

We held that position, though they rained shells on us so hard all that day and night that we thought they were placing a barrage for a raid, and stood to arms until almost noon the next day. But our guns gave back shell for shell, and pounded the Turkish trenches and broke shrapnel over them until they had all they could do to stay in them.

Finally, our guns placed shell after shell in the enemy's communication trenches, and they could neither bring up reinforcements nor retire. So we went over and cleaned them out and took the trench. But then our guns had to stop, because we were in range, and the Turks brought up reinforcements from other parts of the line and we were driven back, after holding their trench all the afternoon. It was about fifty-fifty, though, for when they reinforced one part of the line, some of our troops would break through in another part.

That night there was a terrible rainstorm. I guess it was really a cloud-burst. We had all the water we wanted, then, and more. A great many men and mules were drowned, both of ours and the Turks. Trenches were washed in and most of the works ruined. Several Turkish bodies were borne into our trench, and two mules came over together, but whether they were Turkish, or French, or British, I do not know.

A few days after the rain stopped I was going along the road to the docks at "V" Beach when I saw some examples of the freakishness of shells. There was a long string of mules going back to the trenches with water and supplies of various kinds. We drew up to one side to let them pass. Two or three mules away from us was an old-timer with only one ear, and that very grey, loaded to the gunwales with bags of water. He had had his troubles, that old boy, but they were just about over, for there was a flash and the next minute you could not see a thing left of Old Missouri. He had vanished. But two of the water-bags were not even touched, and another one had only a little hole in it. There they lay on the ground, just as though you had taken the mule out from under them. The mules next him, fore and aft, were knocked down by the concussion but unharmed; but the third mule behind had one ear cut to shreds, and the man walking beside him was badly shot up and stunned.

A little farther on a shell had struck the road and ploughed a furrow two or three feet wide, and just as straight as though it had been laid out by a surveyor. The Turk who fired it must have been a Kelley pool shark, for after running as straight as an arrow for three or four yards, the furrow turned off at almost a right angle and continued for a yard or two more before the shell burst and made a big hole. That Turkish gunner must have put a lot of English on that shell when he fired it. He got somebody's number with that shot, too, and the lad paid pretty high, for there was blood round the hole, not quite dry when we got to it.

Coming back along this same road we halted to let another convoy of mules go past, and an officer of the Royal Naval Division came up and began talking to our officers. He was telling them how he and his men had landed at "X" Beach, and how they had to wade ashore through barbed wire. "And you know," he said in a surprised way, as if he himself could hardly believe it; "the beggars were actually firing on us!" That is just like the Limeys, though. Their idea is not to appear excited about anything at any time, but to act as though they were playing cricket—standing around on a lawn with paddles in their hands, half asleep. The Limeys are certainly cool under fire, and I think it was because the Anzacs did so finely at Gallipoli that people have not given enough credit to the British regulars and

R.N.D.'s, who were there—and did their share of the work as well as any men could.

After a while this officer started on his way again, and as he cut across the road a French officer came up. The Limey wore a monocle, which caused the French officer to stare at him a minute before he saluted. After the Englishman had passed him the Frenchman took a large French penny out of his pocket, screwed it into his eye and turned towards us so that we could see it, but the Limey could not.

That was not the right thing to do, especially before enlisted men, so our officers did not laugh, but the men did, and so loud that the Limey turned and caught sight of the Frenchman. He started back towards him, and I thought sure there would be a fight, or that, more likely, the Limey would report him. Our officers should have placed the Frenchman under arrest, at that.

The Frenchman expected trouble, too, for he pulled up very straight and stiff, but he kept the penny in his eye. The Limey came up to him, halted a few paces off, and without saying a word, took the monocle out of his eye, spun it three or four feet in the air, and caught it in his other eye when it came down.

“Do that, you blighter,” he said, and faced about and was on his way down the road. They had the laugh of the Frenchman after that.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CROIX DE GUERRE

WHEN we had been on shore at Gallipoli for about three weeks we found ourselves one morning somewhere near Sedd-el-Bahr under the heaviest fire I have ever experienced. Our guns and the Turks' were at it full blast, and the noise was worse than deafening. It had been bad enough when only our guns were pounding, but when the Turkish howitzers and rifle guns of all calibres joined in it was simply hell-all-over-us, with Old Nick heating the hinges.

A section of my company was lying out in a shell-hole near the communication trench with nothing to do but wait for a shell to find them. We were stiff and thirsty and uncomfortable, and had not slept for two nights. In that time we had been under constant fire, and had endured several raiding parties and small attacks from the enemy trenches.

We had no sooner got used to the shell-hole and were making ourselves as comfortable as possible in it when along came a shell of what must have been the Jack Johnson size, and we were swamped. We had to dig three of the men out, and though one of them was badly wounded we could not send him



back to hospital. In fact, the shelling was so heavy that none of us ever expected to come out alive.

So it was like keeping your own death watch, with the shells tuning up for the dirge. It was impossible to listen to the shells. If you kept your mind on the noise for any length of time, it would split your ear drums, I am sure. So all we could do was to lie low in the shell-hole and wait for something to happen.

Then they began using shrapnel on us, and one of our machine-gunners, who got up from his knees to change his position, had his head taken clean off his shoulders, and the rest of him landed near my feet and squirmed a little, like a chicken that has just been killed. It was awful to see the body without any head move about in that way, and we could hardly make ourselves touch it for some time. But presently we rolled it to the other side of the hole.

Then, to one side of us, there was a more violent explosion than any yet. The earth spouted up and fell on us, and big clouds of black smoke, sliding along the ground, covered our shell-hole and hung there for some time. One of our sergeants, from the regular French infantry, said it was a shell from a Turkish 150-mm. howitzer. That was only the first one. The worst thing about them was the smoke: people who think Pittsburg is smoky ought to see about fifty of those big howitzer shells bursting one after another.

We could not tell what the rest of our line was doing, or how they were standing the awful fire, but we felt sure they were not having any worse time than we were. In a few minutes we heard the good old "75's" start pounding, and it was like hearing an old friend's voice over the telephone, and everybody in our shell-hole cheered, though no one could hear us and we could barely hear each other. Still, we knew that if the "75's" got going in their usual style they would do for an enemy battery or two, and that looked good for us. The "75's" made the noise worse, but it was already about as bad as it could be, and a thousand guns more or less would not have made it any harder to stand.

One of our men shouted in the sergeant's ear that the men in the line ahead of us and to the right were trying to give us a message of some kind. The sergeant stuck his head above the parapet and had a look. But I stayed where I was : the sergeant could see for himself and me, too, as far as I was concerned.

He shouted at us that the men in the other trench were trying to signal something, but he could not make it out because clouds of smoke would roll between them and break up the words. So he lay down again in the bottom of the hole. But after a while he looked over the parapet and saw a man just leaving their trench, evidently with a message for us, and he had not gone five steps before he was blown

to pieces, and the lad who followed him got his, too, so they stopped trying then.

And all the time the "75's" were sending theirs to the Turk not far over our heads from about nine hundred yards behind us, and the howitzers were dropping their 240-pound bits of iron in every vacant space and some that were not vacant. It was just one big roar and screech and growl all at once, like turning the whole dog-pound loose on a piece of meat.

The concussions felt like one long string of boxes on the ear, and our throats were so dry that it hurt to swallow, which always makes your ears feel better after a strong concussion. One after another of our boys was slipping to the ground and digging his fists into his ears, and the rest sat on the parapet fire-step with their heads between their knees and their arms wrapped round their heads.

Our sergeant came up to me after a while and began acting just as people do at a show, only he shouted instead of whispering in my ear. When people are looking at one show they always want to tell you how good some other show is, and that was the way with the sergeant.

"You should see what they did to us at St. Eloi," he said. "They just baptised us with the big fellows. They did not know when to stop. When you see shelling that is shelling you will know it, my son."

“ Well, if this is not shelling, what the devil is it? Are they trying to kid us or are you, *mon vieux*? ” which is a French expression that means something like “ old-timer.”

“ My son, when you see dug-outs caved in, roads pushed all over the map, guns wrecked, bodies twisted up in knots and forty men killed by one shell—then you will know you are seeing shelling.”

I told him I could get along without seeing any more of it than I had, and he started kidding me about it. He was a great card, this sergeant, and a very brave man. He always called us his children to our faces, but when he spoke of his men to other sergeants he called us “ lice meat,” because he said sailors were better fed than soldiers and were regular dessert for the cooties.

Then one of our men sat up straight against the parapet and stared at us and began to shake all over, but we could not get him to say anything or move. So we knew he had shell-shock. And another man watched him for a while, and then he began to shake, too. The sergeant said that if we stayed there much longer we would not be fit to repel an attack, so he ordered us into the two dug-outs we had made in the hole, and only himself and another man stayed outside on watch.

The men in the dug-out kept asking each other when the bombardment would end, and why we were not reinforced, and what was happening, and when

the Turks would attack us. It was easy to see why we were not reinforced; no body of men could have got to us from the reserve trenches. The communication trenches were quite a distance from us, and were battered up at that. Some of the men said we had been forgotten and that the rest of our troops had either retired or advanced and that we and the men in the trench who had tried to signal us were the only detachments left there.

Pretty soon another man and I relieved the two men who were outside on watch, and as he went down into the dug-out the sergeant shouted to us that he thought the Turks were afraid to attack. He also ordered one of us to keep a live eye towards our rear in case any of our troops should try to signal us. When I looked through a little gully, at the top of the hole, towards the other trench, all I could see was barbed wire and smoke and two or three corpses. I began to shiver a little, and I was afraid I would get shell-shock, too. So I fell a-thinking about Murray and how he looked when they took him off the wall. But that did not stop the shivering, so I thought about my grandmother and how she looked the last time I saw her. I was thinking about her, I guess, and not keeping a very good look-out, when a man rolled over the edge and almost fell on me. He was from the other trenches. I carried him into the dug-out, and went out again and stood my watch until the relief came. We were doing half-hour shifts.

When I got into the dug-out again the man was just coming to. He was about as near shell-shock as I had been—by this time I was shivering only once in a while when I did not watch myself. He said four men had been sliced up trying to get to us before he came; that they had lost eleven men out of their thirty-two, including the sergeant-major in command and two corporals; that they were almost out of ammunition; that the trenches on both sides of them had been blown in, and that they were likely to go to pieces at any moment. He said they all thought the Turks would attack behind their barrage, for he said the curtain of fire did not extend more than a hundred yards in front of their trench. What they wanted us to do was to send a man back with the news and either get the word to advance, or retire, or wait for reinforcements, they did not care which—only to be ordered to do *something*. There was not a commissioned officer left with either of the detachments, you see, and you might say we were up in the air—only we were really as far in the ground as we could get.

The man thought there were others of our lines not far behind us, but we knew better; so then he said he did not see how anyone could get back from where we were to our nearest lines. I did not see either. Then we all imagined we were forgotten and would not come out alive, and you can believe me or not, but I did not much care. Anything would be

better than just staying there in that awful noise with nothing to do, and no water.

Our sergeant said he would not ask any man to attempt to carry the message, because he said it was not only certain death but absolutely useless. And he began to show that he was near shell-shock himself. I was just going to ask him if he thought it was a real shelling now when I saw that he was just about all in, so I did not try to kid him. I figured, too, that he had probably talked about St. Eloï merely to cheer us up, you might say, and make us think it was not so bad, after all.

Then I began to shiver again, and I thought to myself that anything would be better than sitting in this hole waiting to go mad, so I decided I would volunteer. I did not think there was any chance to get through, but it seemed as if I just had to do something, no matter what. I had never felt that way before, and had never been anxious to go West with a shell for company, but I have felt that way since then several times, I can tell you.

The man was telling us that some time before they had seen the Turks bringing up ammunition from some storehouses, and that they had watched through glasses to see if our guns got either the ammunition trains or the storehouses, but that they did not come anywhere near. He said their sergeant wanted our messenger to tell them that, too. He would say a few words very fast, then he would shiver

again, and his jaws would clip together and he would try to raise his hand, but could not.

Then our sergeant asked the name of the other sergeant, and when the man told him, he said the other man was senior to himself, and therefore in command, and would have to be obeyed.

He seemed to cheer up a lot after he said this, and did not shiver any more, so I thought I would volunteer then, and I said to him, "Well, mon vieux, do you think we are seeing real shelling now?" And I was going to say I would go, but he looked at me in a funny way for a second and said, "Well, my son, suppose you go and find out."

I fancied he was kidding me at first, but then I saw he meant it. I thought two things about it: one was that anything was better than staying there, and the other was that the old dug-out was a pretty fair place, after all. But I did not say anything to the sergeant or the other men—just went out of the dug-out. The sergeant and another man went with me and helped me over the back wall of the hole. I lay flat on the ground for a minute to get my bearings, and then started off.

I set my course for where I thought the communication trenches were, to the right, and I just stood up and ran, for I argued that as the shells were falling so thick, and it was open ground, I would not have any better chance if I crawled.

I tripped several times and went down, and each



time I thought I was hit, because when I got it in the thigh at Dixmude it felt a good deal as though I had tripped over a rope. And one time when I fell a shell exploded near me and I began to shiver again, and I could not go on for a while. All this time I did not think I would get through, but finally, when I reached what had been the communication trench, I felt I had done the worst part of it, and I began to wish very hard that I would get through—I was not at all crazy about going West.

The mouth of the communication trench had been battered in, and the trenches it joined with were all filled up. There were rifles sticking out of them in several places, and I thought probably the men had been buried alive in them. But it was too late then, if they had been caught, so I climbed over the blocked entrance to the communication trench and started back along it. It led up through a sort of gully, and I thought it was a bad place to dig a communication trench in because it gave the Turks something like the side of a hill to shoot at.

Every now and then I would have to climb in and out of a shell-hole, and parts of them were blocked where a shell had caved in the walls. In one place I saw corpses all torn to pieces, so I knew the Turks had found the range and had got to this trench in great shape. At another place I found lots of blood and equipment but no bodies, and I concluded that reinforcements had been caught at this

spot and that they had retired, taking their casualties with them.

The Turks still had the range, and they were sending a shell into the trench occasionally, and I was knocked down again, though the shell was so far away that it kicked me over from force of habit more than anything else. I felt dizzy and shivered a lot, and kept trying to think of Murray or anything else but myself.

So, finally, I got to the top of the little hill over which the gully ran, and on the other side I felt almost safe. Just down from the crest of the hill was one of our artillery positions, with the good old "75's" giving it to the Turks as fast as they could.

I told the artillery officer about what had happened, had a drink of water, and thought I would take a nap. But when they telephoned the message back to Divisional Headquarters the man at the receiver said something to the officer, and he told me to stay there and be ready. I thought sure he would send me back to where I came from, and I knew I could never make it again, but I did not say anything.

When I looked round I saw that our real position was to the right of where the artillery was, and that there were three lines of trenches with French infantry in them. So the trenches I had come from were more like outposts than anything else, and were cut off. I felt pretty sure, then, that the boys in

them would never come back alive, because as soon as their fire ceased the Turks would advance, and to keep them back our guns would have to wipe out our men, and if they did not, the Turks would. At first I was glad I had come out, but then I remembered what the artillery officer had said, and I supposed I would have to go back and stay with them or bring them back. Either way, there was not one chance in a hundred that any of us would make it. Because when I got through it was really a miracle, and nobody would have thought it possible.

Then the officer told me to go back to the Beach, where our naval guns were, and that I was detailed to them. Maybe you do not think I was glad? But there was rough work still ahead of me, because when I got beyond the third line I saw a wide open field that was light grey from the shell smoke hanging over it, and I could see the flashes where the big ones were doing their work, and I had to go through that field.

I fell over and over again, sometimes when I thought a shell was near and sometimes when I had no reason for it—only I was thirsty and shivering all the time, and was so weak I could not have choked a goldfish. I do not remember hardly anything about going through that field, and you might say the next thing I knew was when I was overtaken by a dispatch-runner, and got in a tin tub at the side of a motor-cycle and was taken to the guns.

I felt ready for a Rip Van Winkle nap then, but the officer in command would not let me. He said they were short of gunners—the terrific shelling had killed off dozens of them—and as he knew I could point a gun, he had ordered them over the telephone to get me to the Beach as fast as possible. He spotted the two warehouses I have spoken of for me, and said it was up to us to put them out of commission. The gun was a 14-inch naval, and that looked good to me, so I bucked up a lot. The warehouses were about ten or eleven miles away, I should judge, and about thirty or forty yards apart.

I felt very weak, as I have said, and shivered now and again, so I did not think I could do any gunning worth whistling at. But they loaded the old 14-inch and made ready, and we got the range and all was set. The officer told me to let her ride. So I said to myself: "This one is for you, Murray, old boy. Let's go from here."

So I sent that one along and she landed direct, and the warehouse went up in fire and smoke. I felt good then, and I laid the wires on the other warehouse and let her go. But she was too high and I made a clean miss. Then I was mad, because I had sent that one over for myself. So I got the cross wires on the warehouse again and said to myself: "This is not for anybody—just for luck, because I sure have had plenty of it this day."

Then the juice came through the wires and into

the charge and away she went, and up went the second warehouse. That made two directs out of three, and I guess it hurt the Turks some to lose all their ammunition. The officer kissed me before I could duck, and slapped me on the back and I collapsed. I was just all in.

They brought me round with rum, and they said I was singing when I came to. When they tried to sing, to show me what song it was, I considered it was "Sweet Adeline" they meant. But I do not believe I came to singing, because I never sang "Sweet Adeline" before, that I know of, or any other song when anybody was in range. But I had heard it lots of times, so maybe I did sing it at that.

Then I went to sleep feeling fine. The next morning the detachment from the *Cassard* was withdrawn, and I saw some of the men who had been in the two trenches, but I was not near enough to speak to them. So I do not know how they got out.

You never saw a happier lot in your life than we were when we piled into the lifeboats and launches and started for the *Cassard*. The old ship looked pretty good to us, you can bet, and we said if we never put our hoofs on that place again it would be soon enough.

We were shelled on our way out to the *Cassard*, and one boat was overturned, but the men were rescued. Two men in the launch I was in were wounded. But we did not pay any attention to

their shelling—the Turks might just as well have been blowing peas at us through a soda straw for all we cared.

I noticed that when we came near the *Cassard* the other boats held up and let our launch get into the lead, and that we circled round the *Cassard's* bows and came up on the starboard side, which was unusual. But I did not think anything of it until I came up over the side. There<sup>re</sup> were the side boys lined up, and the Old Man there, with the ship's steward beside him.

He took the log-book from the steward and showed it to me, and there was my name on it. Now when you are punished for anything you are logged, but I could not make out what I had done to get punished for, so I was very much surprised. But the Old Man slapped me on the back and everybody cheered, and then I saw it was not punishment but just the opposite.

When people ask me what I received my Croix de Guerre for I tell them I do not rightly know, and that is a fact. I do not know whether it was for going back from those trenches or for destroying the warehouses. So I always tell them I got it for working overtime. That is what the Limeys say, or if they have the Victoria Cross they say they got it for being very careless. Ask one of them and see.

All of us were certainly glad to be aboard the *Cassard* again, and if any place ever looked like home

to me it was the old ship. Our casualties were very high, and we were therefore ordered to put back to Brest. We had a great little celebration that night, and next morning weighed anchor and started back, after clearing for action.

I was still pretty blue about Murray, but very much relieved as to the safety of my own skin, and I reasoned that, after the Dardanelles and my last day there, they had not made the right bullet for me yet. The rest of us felt about the same way, and we were singing all the time.

## CHAPTER XV

### JE SUIS BLESSÉ

As usual, when we got to Brest, there was rush work day and night on the *Cassard* to get her out, and supplies of all kinds were loaded for our next visit to the Turks. The French garbies were always keen for the trip back to Brest, for they were sure of tobacco and other things they needed.

My twelfth trip to the Dardanelles was different from the others. The *Cassard* was doing patrol work at the time in the neighbourhood of Cape Helles. Those of us who had served on the Peninsula before were thanking our stars for the snap we were having—just mooning around waiting for something to happen.

We had not been there very long before something unexpected *did* happen, for we ran into two enemy cruisers—which I afterwards heard were the *Werft* and the *Kaiserliche Marine*—one on the starboard and one on the port. How they had managed to sneak up so near I do not know. They opened up on us at not much more than a thousand yards, and gave us a good deal of hell from the start, though with any kind of gunnery they should have done for us thoroughly.



We came right back at them, and were getting in some pretty good shots. I was in the 14-inch gun turret, starboard bow—my old quarters—and we were letting them have it about four shots every five minutes and scoring heavily.

I do not know how long we had been fighting when part of our range-finder was carried away. It was so hot, though, and we were so hard at it that little things like the time did not bother us. It is hot in any gun turret, but I have always noticed that it is hotter there in the Dardanelles than in any other place. The sweat would simply cake up on us, until our faces were covered with a film of powdery stuff.

But the range-finder was carried away, and although it looked bad for us, I was feeling so good that I volunteered to go on deck and fetch another one. I got outside the turret door and across the deck, got the necessary parts, and was coming back with them, when I received two machine-gun bullets in the right thigh. One went clear through bone and all and drilled a hole on the other side, while the other came within an inch of going through. The peculiar thing is that these two were in a line above the wound I got at Dixmude. The line is almost as straight as you could draw it with a ruler.

Of course, it knocked me down, and I hit my head a pretty hard crack on the steel deck, but I was able to crawl on to the turret door. Just as I

was about to enter, the gun was fired. That particular charge happened to be defective. The shell split and caused a back fire, and the cordite, fire and gas came through the breach which the explosion had opened.

It must have been a piece of cordite which did it, but whatever it was, it hit me in the right eye and blinded it. The ball of the eye was saved by the French surgeons and looks normal, but it pains me greatly sometimes, and they tell me it will always be sightless.

I was unconscious immediately from the blow and from the quantity of gas which I must have swallowed. This gas did me a great deal of damage, and gives me dizzy spells often to this day. I do not know what happened during the rest of the engagement, as I did not regain consciousness until three days later, at sea. But I heard in the hospital that the French super-Dreadnought *Jeanne d'Arc* and the light cruiser *Normandy* were in it as well as ourselves, though not at the time I was wounded, and that we had all been pretty well battered. The *Cassard* lost ninety-six men in the engagement and had forty-eight wounded. Some of our turrets were twisted into all manner of shapes, and part of our bow was carried away. One of our lieutenants was killed in the engagement.

I was told that both the *Werft* and the *Kaiserliche Marine* were sunk in this engagement. I have

seen pictures of sailors from the *Werft* who were prisoners at internment camps.

When we arrived at Brest the wounded were taken from the ship in stretchers and, after we had been rested for about fifteen minutes on the dock, put into ambulances and rushed to the hospital. On the way, those who could leaned out of the ambulance and had a great time with the people along the streets, many of whom they knew, for the *Cassard* was a Brest ship. And, of course, the women and children yelled "Vive la France!" and were glad to see the boys again, even though they were badly done up.

Some of our men were bandaged all over the face and head, and it was funny when they had to tell their names to old friends of theirs who did not recognise them. As soon as one of the Brest people recognised a friend, off he would go to get cigarettes and other things for him, and some of them followed us almost to the hospital.

While we were going into the hospital there was a crowd of children round the door, and they began to sing the "Marseillaise," and very loyal-hearted kids they were too, for they evidently knew the whole song, which is more than can be said for most Americans, many of whom do not even know that we have a national anthem.

It seemed like a palace—that hospital. The women and children—the kindest hearts in the world,

I do believe, were right there—brought over chairs and tables and cards and newspapers and books and everything you could think of, and they brought them from their own living-rooms and not from the attic, where they had lain since they had become listed with the casualties.

We had a fine lot of musicians among the men—most of them could blow some kind of horn or other, and before the week was up almost every one of them had his own particular kind of torture-tube placed in his hands as he lay in bed. They would hardly stop to look at it, but would begin blowing away for all they were worth, and hardly ever did they care a rap what the rest were playing. Once in a while someone did happen to play the same tune as another, but each had his own ideas as to how it should be played, and it would take an expert to discover they were the same tunes. They were, sure, the Agony Quartette—four or five quartettes, in fact.

We also had a phonograph, but very few needles, and it got to be very scratchy. They had one American record, and it was supposed to be a special treat for me; some well-meaning Frenchwoman must have brought it as soon as she heard there was an American garby there.

I never was crazy about that song, and after they had played it a few times I used to throw everything I could lay my hands on at the phonograph whenever they started to give me my great treat again.

There was one French orderly who never could get it through his thick head—he was good-hearted, though—that I did not like it, and he would play it time after time. I guess he thought it cheered me up so much that I became enthusiastic and wanted to throw things because I was glad. The name of the merry little ditty was “Good-bye, Good Luck, God Bless You.” And I am warning whoever wrote it, right here, to steer clear of me if he wears any identification disc telling that he did it.

The hospital held about 1,800 patients at the time, and was pretty crowded, but every one of the patients received the best of food and treatment, and some of the stunts that the French surgeons did were really wonderful. As soon as they were able to learn, the permanent blinded or crippled men were taught various trades in which their misfortune would not hamper them, and many were put in the way of earning more money afterwards than they had been able to earn before.

I do not know, of course, what the surgeons did to me, but I heard that they had my eyeball out on my cheek for almost two hours. At any rate they saved it. The thigh wounds were not dangerous in themselves, and if it had not been for the rough treatment they got later they would be quite healed by this time, I am sure.

I really think I got a little extra attention in the hospital, in many ways, for the French were at

all times anxious to show their friendliness to America. Every time my meals were served there was an American flag on the platter, and always a large American flag draped over the bed. I had everything I wanted given to me at once, and when I was able to, all the cigarettes I could smoke, which were not many.

While I was still in bed in the hospital I received the Croix de Guerre, which I had won at the Dardanelles. The presentation was made by Lieutenant Barbey. He pinned an American flag on my breast, a French flag beneath it, and beneath that the War Cross. He kissed me on both cheeks, of course, which was taking an advantage of a cripple. But it is the usual thing with the French, as you know—I mean the kissing, not the meanness to cripples.

When he had pinned the medal on he said he thanked me from the bottom of his heart, on behalf of the French people, and also thanked all the Americans who had come over to help a country with which most of them were not connected. He said it was a war in which many nations were taking part, but in which there were just two ideas, Freedom and Despotism, and a lot more things I cannot remember. He finished by saying that he wished he could decorate all of us.

Of course, it was great stuff for me, and I thought I was the real thing sure enough, but I could not help thinking of the remark I have heard here in

the States—"I thank you and the whole family thanks you." And it was hard not to laugh. Also, it seemed funny to me, because I did not rightly know just what they were giving me the medal for—though it was for one of two things—and I do not know to this day. But I thought it would not be polite to ask, so I let it go at that.

There were twelve other naval officers who were present, and they and all the other people did a lot of cheering and "vived" me to a fare-you-well. It was great stuff altogether, and I should have liked to get a medal every day.

One day I received a letter from a man who had been in my company in the Foreign Legion and with whom I had been pretty chummy. His letter was partly in French and partly in English. It was all about who had been killed and who had been wounded. He also mentioned Murray's death, which he had heard about, and about my receiving the Croix de Guerre. I was wishing he had said something about Brown, whom I had not heard from, and who, I knew, would visit me if he had the chance.

But two or three days later I got another letter from the same man, and when I opened it out tumbled a photograph. At first all I saw was that it was the photograph of a man crucified with bayonets, but when I looked at it closely I saw it was Brown. I fainted then, just like a girl.

When I came to I could hardly make myself

think about it. Two of my pals gone! It hurt me so much to think of it that I crushed the letter up in my hand, but later I could read parts of it. It said they had found Brown this way near Dixmude about two days after he had been reported missing. So three of us went over and two stayed there. It seems very strange to me that both my pals should be crucified, and if I were superstitious I do not know really what I would imagine. It made me sick and kept me from recovering as fast as I would have done otherwise. Both Brown and Murray were good pals and very fine men in a fight. I often think of them both and about the things we did together, but lately I have tried my best to keep off the subject, because it is very sad to think what torture they must have had to endure. They were both a great credit to their country.

The American consul visited me quite often, and I got to calling him Sherlock, because he asked so many questions. We played lots of games together, mostly with dice, and had a great time generally. After I became convalescent he argued with me that I had seen enough, and though I really did not think so—however much I disliked what I had seen—he got my discharge from the service on account of physical inability to perform the usual duties. After I had been at the hospital for a little over a month I was discharged from it, after a party in my ward with everyone taking part, and all the horns blowing,



and all the records except my favourite dirge played one after another.

Sherlock arranged everything for me—my passage to New York, clothing, and so forth. I ran up to St. Nazaire and saw my grandmother, loafed around a while, and also visited Lyons.

I met a girl there who was staying with some people I knew, and she told me, a little bit at a time, what she had been through. I do not know whether she was a Belgian or not, but she was in Belgium at the outbreak of the war. When the Germans took the town she was in they put up signs on the doors notifying the inhabitants that all the girls must report in the square the following morning.

This girl and her sister reported with the rest. They were divided into two classes, and the class in which the two sisters were was told to report at the station the next morning. They went home and broke the news to their mother, who was quite old and who took it very hard. They had no idea what they were being sent away for. The mother begged permission to keep one of the girls, and the Germans placed the other sister in the class that was to stay.

Three girls who refused to go were dragged to the streets and killed in cold blood, and the mother of one girl, who refused to let her go, was shot. The girls were sent to the courtyard of a big hotel, mustered with a roll call, and loaded into cars. After a nine-hours' journey they were taken from the trains

to a large building partly in ruins and there the German soldiers were waiting for them. The girls were not given food or fire.

Late that night, after the Germans were through with them, they were made to go outside and dig potatoes from the hard ground, but they were not allowed to eat any of the potatoes. They also had to make beds, chop wood, haul timber and do all the dirty work that has to be done wherever German swine are penned.

They were not allowed to write to their people, nor did they receive any word from outside. Fresh batches of girls arrived from time to time, but they were not allowed to mix with those who had been there before them. When the girls reached such a condition that they were no longer of use to the Germans they were sent back to Belgium.

The girl who told me all this had killed her child, as all of them did. When she got home she found her mother had been killed, but she never saw her sister again nor did she know what had become of her.

After a short time I returned to Brest, and got my passage on the *Georgic* for New York. I had three trunks with me full of things I had picked up in Europe and had been keeping with my grandmother. Among my belongings were several things I should have liked to show by photographs in this book, but no one but mermaids can see them now, for down to the locker of Davy Jones they went.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CAPTURED BY THE *MOEWE*

WHEN the tugs had cast off and we had dropped our pilot I said to myself: "Now we are off, and it's the States for me—end of the line—far as we go—IF——" But the "if" did not look very big to me, though I could see it with the naked eye all right.

I went to the after-wheelhouse and took a slant at the compass which read W.N.W.,  $\frac{3}{4}$  W. I stayed and chatted a while with the boys there, and then went to see the commissary steward and laid in a supply of cigarettes. Provided with these, I went back to the after forecastle and found a lot of firemen, oilers and wipers who were off watch. I played poker for cigarettes with these fellows until the game broke up, with one fireman in possession of all the cigarettes. After that I went to my stateroom and turned in.

Next morning I went to the galley, and after a hard struggle with the chef got something to eat. Then came boat-drill. The siren shrilled three times, and we were all stationed at the boats, which were swung out on the davits. We carried ten lifeboats, five on the starboard and five on the port.

When the siren blew the second time it was a sight to see the scramble on deck for the boats. Someone yelled, "Submarine on the port bow!" and all the little fellows were trampled on, and one lad was pushed down the fiddley (*see* p. 201) and broke his leg. I made up my mind then and there that if we should happen to get torpedoed it was me for a hatch cover and no lifeboats need apply. I would rather take my chances with a match for a buoy than in a rush for the boats with that gang.

It was rough weather those first two days out, and it was raining most of the time. I should not have been on deck at all, because the dampness made my legs ache, but there was one of the gunners at the stern gun that was good for a laugh every time I talked to him. It was a shame the way that fellow was going to treat any Germans he saw. No submarine would have a minute's chance with him; he would put salt on any Boche tail in sight. I took it all in and told him what a guy for gunpowder he was, but after a while I got tired trying not to laugh in his face and left him.

I loafed around or slept all day, and at night started back to the after-forecastle to have another go at cigarette poker. You know, of course, that ships passing through the war zone cover all their port-holes, allowing no lights to show whatsoever, and even smoking on deck is forbidden. So I was pretty sore when I found the firemen had their port-holes

wide open, and the light shining through like a searchlight.

I bawled out to them and asked them whether they thought they were in London or Germany, and if they did not know they were in the war zone. Then one of them said, "War zone be damned! There is no such thing as a war zone." We had a little argument, and after a while they closed the port-holes. But we did not have a poker game.

Then I got an envelope and paper from the steward, and went to my stateroom with the intention of writing a letter to a friend and mailing it as soon as I arrived at an Atlantic port. But a Limey knocked at the door just after I got started, and he talked to me for a long time. Finally he asked me what I was doing. I felt like telling him I was doing nothing but wishing he would leave me, but I said I had been going to write a letter when he came in. He asked me where I was going to mail it, and I said I would stop the mail steamer in the morning. And I think he believed me!

At last he went out and I turned in without writing the letter. I got up about four o'clock next morning, which was Sunday, December 10th, 1916—a date I do not think I will ever forget.

As soon as I was dressed I went down to the forecastle peak and from there into the paint locker, where I found some rope. Then back again on deck and made myself a hammock, which I rigged up on

the boat deck, expecting that I would have a nice sun bath, as the weather had at last turned clear.

As soon as I had the hammock strung I went down to the baker and had a chat with him—and stole a few hot buns, which was what I was really after—and away to the galley for breakfast. I was almost exactly amidships, sitting on an old orange box. I had not been there long when Old Chips, the ship's carpenter, stuck his head in the door and sang out, "Ship on the starboard bow." I did not pay any attention to him, because ships on the starboard bow were no novelty to me, or on the port either. Chips was not crazy about looking at her either, for he came in and sat on another box and began eating. He said he thought she was a tramp, and that she flew the British flag astern.

I ate all I could get hold of and went out on deck. I stepped out of the galley just in time to see the fun. The ship was just opposite us, when away went our wireless and some of the boats on the starboard side, and then boom! boom! and we heard the report of the guns. I heard the shrapnel whizzing around us just as I had many a time before. I jumped back in the galley, and Chips and the cook were shaking so hard they made the pans rattle.

When the firing stopped I went up to the boat deck. I had on all my clothing, but instead of shoes I was wearing a pair of wooden clogs. The men and boys were crazy—rushing round the deck, and

knocking each other down, and everybody getting in everybody else's way. We lowered our jacob's ladders (rope ladders with wooden steps), but some of the men and boys were already in the water. Why they jumped I do not know.

There was an oiler on the *Georgic* named Mallen, and though he wore glasses, he was the toughest bird I ever saw. He had been almost stone blind for a year and a half, and he could hardly see at all without his glasses, which were thick and powerful. He was on the boat deck when they began shelling us, and it was a miracle he was not killed at once, but he was able to hide behind a funnel. When they quit firing you could have worn that funnel for a peek-a-boo waist (open-work blouse), but Mallen was not scratched. I guess he was so tough the shrapnel was afraid of him.

When he was going down the jacob's ladder the fellow above him must have been in a hurry, for he kicked Mallen in the face and broke one of the lenses, which left Mallen with a monocle. He held it up in front of one eye and shut the other one, and that was the only way he could see a foot in front of him.

Then the German raider *Moewe* headed right in towards us, and I thought she was going to ram us, but she backed water about thirty yards away. She lowered a lifeboat, and it made for the *Georgic*, passing our men in the water as it came and crashing them on the head with boathooks when the Huns

could reach them. I noticed that there were red kegs in the German boat.

When the lifeboat reached the jacob's ladder I went over to the port side of the *Georgic*, and then the Germans came over the side and hoisted up the kegs. The Huns were armed with bayonets and revolvers. Some of them went down into the engine-room and opened the sea cocks. About this time some more of the Limeys came up from the poop deck, and I told them to stay where I was, and that the Germans would take us over in lifeboats. Another squad of *Deutschers* hoisted eight of the dynamite kegs on their shoulders and went down into No. 5 hold with them.

Meanwhile the Huns saw us on the boat deck and came up after us. And over went the Limeys. But I waited and one or two more waited with me. When the Germans came up to us they had their revolvers out and were waving them around and yelling, "Gott strafe England!" and talking about "schweinhunde." Then, the first thing I knew, I was kicked off into the sea. I slipped off my trousers and coat and clogs, and, believe me, it was not a case of all dressed up and no place to go!

Then I swam hard and caught up to the Limeys who had jumped first. They were asking each other if they were downhearted and answering, "Not a bit of it, me lads," and trying to sing, "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag," only they could not do



much singing on account of the waves that slipped into their mouths every time they opened them. That was just like Limeys, though. They will carry on, to use a well-known expression, "till hell freezes over."

Some of the boys were just climbing up the jacob's ladder on the *Mocwe* when the old *Georgic* let out an awful roar and up went the deck and the hatches high in the air in splinters. One fellow let go his hold on the ladder and went down, and he never came up. The Germans were making for the *Moewe* in the lifeboat, and we reached it just before they did. Up the ladder we went and over the side, and the first thing we caught sight of was German revolvers in our faces, forming us all into line.

The lifeboat brought back the ship's papers from the *Georgic* and we had roll call. They kept us on deck in our wet underwear, and it was very cold indeed. Then the first mate and the Old Man and one of the German officers called off the names, and we found we had fifty missing.

The Boche commander had cheek enough to say to our Old Man that he was not there to kill men, but to sink all ships that were supplying the Allies! He said England was trying to starve Germany, but they would never succeed, and that Germany would starve the Allies very soon.

After roll call some of us asked the Germans for clothes, or at least a place to dry ourselves in, but

Fritz could not see us for the dust of the ocean, and we just had to stand there and shiver till we shook the deck almost. Then I went and sat down on the pipes that feed the deck winches. They had quite a head of steam in them, and I was beginning to feel more comfortable when I got a good clout on the side of the head for sitting there and trying to keep warm. It was a German garby, and he started calling me all the various kinds of "schweinhund" he could think of, and he could think of a lot.

Finally they mustered us all on another part of the deck, then drove us down into the forecandle and read the martial law of Germany to us. At least, I guess that is what it was. It might have been the "Help Wanted—Dog Catchers" column from the *Berlin Lokal Taggabble* for all most of us knew or cared. It shows what cards the Germans are—reading all those four-to-the-pound words to us shivering garbies, who did not give a dime a dozen whether we heard them or not. Fritz is like some other hot sketches—he is funniest when he does not mean to be. Every German is a vaudeville skit when he acts natural.

There were hammocks there and we jumped into them to get warm, but the Germans came down with their revolvers and bayonets and took the hammocks away, and poured water on the decks and told us to sleep *there*. They could not have done a worse trick than that.

Then they put locks on the port-holes, and told us that anyone caught fiddling with the locks would be shot at once. This was because we might sight a British or French man-of-war at any time, and as the *Moewe* was sailing under the British flag and trying to keep out of trouble, they did not want us at the ports signalling our own warships for help. If they had struck any of the Allied ships and had a fight we would have died down there like rats.

The *Moewe* had already captured the *Voltaire*, *Mount Temple*, *Cambrian Range* and the *King George*, and had the crews of these vessels between decks with us. These men told us how the Germans were treating them, and it looked to me as though the evening would be spent in playing games and a pleasant time would be had by all—*very*.

The crew of the *Mount Temple* were on deck working when the raider suddenly opened fire on them. Two or three men jumped into the water, and the Germans turned a gun on them while they were swimming and killed them. That was just a sample of what had happened to them.

The men now began running up and down in a line to keep warm, but I took a little run on my own hook and treated myself to as much of a survey of the ship as I could. I do not believe the *Moewe* had more than a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch armour plate, but behind that she had three rows of pig iron, which made about a foot in thickness. There was nothing but cable

strung along the deck, and when I saw that I would have given anything to have had a crack at her with a 14-inch naval. And I sure wished hard enough that one of our ships would slip up on us, whether we were caught between decks or not. I went aft as far as the sentry would let me, and I saw that she had three spare 6-inch guns under the poop deck and two 6-inch pieces mounted astern. The guns were mounted on an elevator, and when the time came they ran the elevator up until the guns were on a level with the poop deck, but otherwise they were out of sight from other ships.

The boys from the other ships told us that when the *Moerwe* fired it was a case for prayers, because she trembled like a leaf. Besides, they never knew what she was battling with, and I know myself that it is an awful sensation down there between decks thinking that at any moment your ship will be hit amidships and the whole crowd of you sent West.

They said that when the *Moerwe* was about to go into action there would be a lot of yelling and running round on deck, and the Huns would lie below with their revolvers and bayonets or cutlasses and intimidate the whole lot, shouting and poking with the bayonets. They used to come down regularly and shout the "schweinhund" code at us and kick us and shove us about like cattle.

For our first meal they slung a big feed-bag half full of ship biscuits—hard-tack—to us and some

dixies of tea. After this festival we began roaming up and down the deck again, because it was the only way to keep warm. I guess we looked like some of the advertisements in magazines, where they show a whole family sitting round a Christmas tree in their underwear and telling each other that Whosis Unions—"The Roomy Kind"—were just what they wanted from Santy. Only we did not have any Christmas tree to sit round. We must have looked funny, though, and I would have had a good laugh if I had not been so cold.

We could not go to sleep because the decks were wet, nor could we sit down with any comfort for the same reason. Besides, we thought we might run up against a British or a French cruiser at any minute, and most of us thought we would stay up and get an eye full before we started for Davy Jones's well-known locker.

About two bells next morning the *Moewe's* engines began to groan and shake her up a bit, and we could hear the blades jump out of the water every now and again and tear away. She went ahead in this way for some time, and we were hoping she was trying to get away from a cruiser, and some of us were voting for the cruiser to win and others hoping the *Moewe* would get her heels clear and keep us from getting ours.

The Huns were running up and down the deck yelling like mad, and one of our men began to yell,

too. He was delirious, and after he yelled a bit, he jumped up and made a pass at the sentry, who shot at him but missed. The shot missed me, too, but not by very much. Then they dragged the delirious man up on deck, and Lord knows what they did with him, because we never saw him again. But we did not hear any sound that they might have made in shooting him.

Then the Huns began shelling, and they kept it up for a while. About the time the firing ceased, this man Mallen—the man who had his glasses broken—was walking up and down the deck holding the one lens to his eye, when he bumped up against a sentry on his blind side. The sentry began to smash him all over the deck. He knocked him down several times, and split his lip for about four inches with the butt of his revolver. The rest of us were just aching to lay our hands on the sentry, but the other sentries warned us off with their revolvers, and one of them clipped me on the head with the hilt of his bayonet when I started forward.

When we picked Mallen up he had lost his monocle and was as blind as a bat, but as tough as ever. In a minute or two one of the men came up with his monocle. He had found it far away from where Mallen had been, and there was not so much as a scratch on the lens. Mallen was real glad to get it. Part of the gold band that fitted over the nose was still on it, so we broke this off and rubbed it until

the edge was smooth as the gold rim, and to cheer Mallen up a bit I told him about the Limey officer at "V" Beach who had spun his monocle in the air and caught it in his other eye. Mallen said he would learn to do that if it took him a hundred years. He started to practise right away. Anyone else would have held on to the lens and not monkeyed with it, but that was not Mallen. He was throwing the glass into the air all the time and trying to catch it in his eye, when it was all he could do to hold it there like a monocle. I have seen him spin it and let it drop a dozen times, and yet it never broke.

Then the Huns ordered us up on deck to see the ship they had been firing at, and when we came up the companion-way they were just bringing the other ship's skipper aboard. It was the French collier *St. Théodore*, hove to off the starboard side, with a prize crew from the *Moewe* aboard and wigwagging to the raider.

I looked round while we were taking the air and shivering, and I never saw a stronger watch than they were keeping on the *Moewe*. There were two men up forward on the forecastle peak, one on the starboard and one on the port bow, one up in the crow's-nest, about twelve on the bridge, and four on the poop deck. I do not believe that gang could miss a splinter in the water, and every one of them had binoculars.

There was nothing to be seen on deck but the

torpedo tubes up against the sea gates, with tarpaulins over them, and piles of lifebelts thrown on top of the hatches. On the bridge they had wicker baskets with carrier pigeons in them, and near the funnels they had livestock—a cow, pigs, dogs, and chickens—all caged in.

Then the Huns began shouting, and they drove us below deck again. The place where we had been was filled with smoke, from what or why I do not know, but it was almost impossible to breathe in it. When the smoke cleared up a bit the Marathon started again, for we were still in our underwear only. One of the boys had asked Fritz for clothing, and Fritz said the English had tough enough skins and they did not need clothing. Then he said: "Wait until you see what our German winters are like."

Next morning the engines began to tear away again and the guns started firing. After a while the firing stopped and the engines, too, and after about an hour they had the Old Man of the *Yarrowdale* aboard. She was a British ship chartered by the French and bound for Brest and Liverpool with a very valuable cargo—aeroplanes, ammunition, food and automobiles.

When they forced us on deck again the *St. Théodore* was still in sight, but she had the *Yarrowdale* for company. Both were trailing behind us and keeping pretty close on. While we were on



deck we saw the German sailors at work on the main deck making about ten rafts, and when they began to place tins of hard-tack on the rafts, a tin to each, we imagined they were going to heave us over the side and let us go. But instead, they began telling us we would land in the States, and then they marched us between decks again.

We had only been there a short time when some of the German officers came down and asked if any of the men would volunteer to go stoking on the *Yarrowdale*, and we almost mobbed them to take us. They began putting down the names of the men who were to go, and I talked them into putting mine down, too. Then I felt about five hundred pounds lighter.

Five o'clock came, and by that time I had forgotten to do any worrying. We received our usual rations, and most of us who had volunteered supposed that we would receive clothes and shoes. In the morning an officer came down below and read out the names of those who were to go, and I felt even lighter when he called mine. We were each given a lifebelt and mustered on deck.

There was a moving-picture machine on the boat deck, and as we came up the hatchway the operator began turning the handle. I was whistling, "Hello, Hawaii, How Are You?" and one of the sentries said to me in English: "That's all Americans are good for, anyway." Then he started to whistle.

“ Goodbye, My Blue Bell, Farewell to You.” He said some more then, to the effect that we Americans had very little on our minds and, generally speaking, were not responsible. I never was guilty before, and never have been since, but I must confess that at this moment I made up some poetry. It came to me just as easy as if I had been in the business, and I said to him: “ We can smile when we fight, and whistle when we’re right, and knock the Kaiser out of sight.” They were shoving us over the side and down the jacob’s ladder, and this lad took hold of me where my collar would have been, if I had one, and gave me a push that brought me up against the rail before my turn.

The sea was pretty nasty, and some of the men had narrow escapes from falling between the *Moewe* and the lifeboats when the swells rocked us. One man fell from the ladder and broke his neck on the gunwale of the lifeboat. They took over boat after boat to the *Yarrowdale* until, finally, we were all there. Then they mustered us on deck and warned us not to start anything, because they had a time bomb in the engine-room and two on the bridge. Meantime they had brought over several boatloads of hard-tack, and we threw it into No. 3 hold. This was to be our food for some time.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LANDED IN GERMANY

ABOARD the *Yarrowdale* was a coolie crew, and when they gathered them on deck, the coolies began to pray, and though it is nothing to laugh at, I could not help but chuckle at the way some of them went about talking to their various gods. They were beginning to smell danger and were pretty nervous. Every one of the coolies had a cane and a pair of palm beach trousers. The Huns were loading them in the lifeboats to be taken back to the *Moewe* with their sea bags, and one of them got too nervous and was slow about getting into the lifeboat, so the Germans shot him without a word.

Then the Huns called out the names of those who had volunteered to go stoking, and this included me. We were forced down the fiddley into the fire room. The fiddley is a shaft that runs from the main deck of a ship to the engine-room. I looked round a bit and saw a German standing not very far from the fiddley, so I asked him if we would be given shoes. He said no. Then I asked him if we had to stoke in our bare feet and he said yes—that we did not need shoes. Then he went into the engine-room.

I looked at the narrow passage he went through, and at the narrow passage of the fiddley to the main deck, and I talked to my feet as I used to at Dixmude. I said: "Feet, do your duty." They did it and I flew up the fiddley. I never wanted to see that stoke-hole again.

I sneaked up to where the rest of the fellows were and the guards drove us into No. 4 hold. There was nothing but ammunition in it. They battened the hatches down on us, which made the hold waterproof. And as that made it practically airtight, the only air the five hundred and eighty of us got was through the ventilators. That hold was certainly foul.

Next day some of the men had got cigarettes somewhere. Lord knows how they did it, but Mallen had quite a lot of them and he passed them round. Some of the men would not take any of his because they said they had some of their own and, sure enough, in a few minutes they, as well as the rest, had lit up and were puffing away in great style. I divided a cigarette with another fellow. Remember, we were sitting and standing on ammunition all this time. It shows how much we cared whether school was kept or not.

The Germans saw the smoke coming out of the ventilators and they were crazy with fright. A gang of them in double quick drove us out with whips. Mallen and I were towards the head of the line going up the ladder, and Mallen was swearing because he

had just lost his monocle and could hardly see a foot in front of him. He said a sentry had tripped him or knocked him down, and that when he got up his monocle was gone.

They lined us up on deck and read us the Riot Act. As we stood there I could see one man after another put his hands behind his back and then bring them to the front again. Finally, the man next to me nudged me with his elbow. I put my hands behind my back and he slipped something into them, and I passed it to the next man. Then the first thing I knew there was Mallen with his monocle in his eye again. Somebody had found it and brought it up with him, and we had passed it along almost the whole line before it got to Mallen.

They sent us down into the coal bunkers. It was simply hell there. Coal dust to breathe and eat and sleep on, only we could not sleep because we had to use the bunkers for all purposes, including those of nature, and after a short time not one of us could sleep.

Also, by this time, some of the men had lost their heads completely; in fact, had gone violently crazy, and the rest of us were afraid of them. We were all thinking of the fight that might occur any moment between the *Yarrowdale* and some other vessel, and we knew we were in the likeliest place for the vessel to be struck. Even though we were not hit amidships, if the ship were sinking, we did not

think the Germans would give us a chance to escape. We supposed from what they had said that we would go down with the ship. And going down on a ship in which you are a prisoner is quite different from going down with one for which you have been fighting. You arrive at the same place, but the feeling is different.

Some of us thought of overpowering the crew and taking the vessel into our own hands, and we got the rest of the sane or nearly sane men together and tried to get up a scheme for doing it. I was strong for the plan and so were Mallen and several others, but the Limey officers who were with us advised against it. They said the Germans were taking us to a neutral country, where we would be interned, which was just what the Huns had told us, but what few of us believed.

Then some others said that if we started anything the skunks would fire the time bombs. We replied that at least the Germans would go West with us, but they could not see that there was any glory in that. For myself, I thought they would not fire the bombs until the last minute, and that we would have a chance at the boats before they got all of us anyway. Old Mallen put up quite a talk about it, and it was funny to see him sitting there on the coal with his monocle slipping out of his eye repeatedly, arguing that we would all have an equal chance of getting away, even if many of us did go West. There were

only thirteen German sailors on board, besides their commander. This last Hun was named Badewitz.

So the pacifists ruled, because we could not do anything unless we were all together, and there was no mutiny. They said we were hotheads, the rest of us, but I still think we could have made a dash for it and overpowered our sentries, and either gone over the side with the lifeboats, or taken over the whole ship. It would have been better for us if we had tried, and if the pacifists had known what was coming to us they would have fired the time bombs themselves rather than go on into that future. However, that is spilt milk.

We were not allowed to open the port-holes while we were in the bunkers, under penalty of death, and in the dark, in that stinking air, it is no wonder that many of us went crazy. Among us was a fellow named Harrington, about six feet tall and weighing around 250 pounds. He seemed to be all right mentally, but some of us thought afterwards he was dotty. Anyway, I do not blame him for what he did. He rushed up the fiddley and opened the door. A German sentry was there, and Harrington made a swing at him and then grabbed his bayonet. The sentry yelled and some others came down from the bridge and shot Harrington through the hand. After they had beaten him pretty badly, the bull of the bullies, Badewitz himself, came over and hammered

Harrington all round the deck. Then they put him in irons and took him to the chart-room.

Next day we were sitting in the fiddley getting warm when the door opened and there was Badewitz. He yelled "Heraus!" and began firing at us with a revolver, so we retired right to the coal. The others would not go back after this, but Mallen and I did. We had sat there about three-quarters of an hour when Mallen lost his monocle. It fell all the way down to the stoke-hole, and I thought for sure it was gone this time, and so did Mallen. Badewitz poked his ugly face in at the door again, but we were too quick for him and he did not catch us. I had to shove Mallen over, though, because he could not see.

Then the first thing we knew, back came the monocle. One of the stokers had found it on his scoop just as he was about to swing the scoopful into the fire door, and there it was, still unbroken. Mallen was so glad he almost went crazy, too.

Pretty soon the door opened again, and Mallen gave me his monocle and ran into the farthest corner of the bunkers, because he thought it was Badewitz come to shoot at us again, and he was afraid he would lose his eye-glass. But it was only a German sentry. He threw down a note. It was written in English and read, "Pick out eight men for cooks." So we picked out eight men from the various vessels, and they went on deck and rigged up a galley aft.



But we did not receive any knives, forks, spoons, or plates. The first meal we got was nothing but macaroni, piled up on pieces of cardboard boxes. Then we appointed four men to serve the macaroni, and they got four pieces of wood, the cleanest we could find, which was not very clean at that, and they dug round in the macaroni and divided it up and put it in our hands. We had to eat it after that with our grimy fingers. Those who were helped first had to go farthest back on the coal to eat it, and those who were helped last got less, because the dividers grew more careful towards the end and gave smaller portions.

But we did not get macaroni very long. A cook from the *Voltaire* was cleaning a copper dixie which the macaroni had been cooked in, and he was holding it over the side when the vessel rolled heavily, and dropped the dixie into the drink. A sentry who saw him drop it forced him up to Badewitz, who began mauling him before the sentry even had told his story. After a while Badewitz quit pounding the cook, and listened to the sentry. Then Badewitz said the cook had put a note in the dixie before he dropped it, so they had him up again and put him in irons. After that they sent the rest of the cooks back, and would not let them on deck again. They had plenty of canned goods and meat aboard, but they would not give us any.

Five of the men were buried at sea that day. More men were going mad, and it was a terrible

place; pitch dark, grimy, loose coal underfoot, coal-dusty air to breathe, excrement everywhere. Some of the crazy men howled like dogs. But we were not as much afraid of these as we were of the others who kept still, but slipped round in the dark with lumps of coal in their hands. We got so we would not go near each other for fear we were running into a crazy man. Those of us who were sane collected as near the fiddle as we could, and we would not let the others come near us, but shoved them back or shied lumps of coal at them. And some one of us would begin to act queer. Maybe he would let out a howl suddenly, without any warning. Or he would just quit talking and begin to sneak round. Or he would squat down and begin to mumble. We could not tell just when a man had begun to lose his mind. He would seem like the rest of us, because none of us was much better than a beast.

We could not take turns sleeping and standing watch against the crazy men, because when we talked about it, we agreed that none of us could tell whether or not the sentries would go mad while on watch and have the rest of us at their mercy. It was awful to talk about becoming demented in this way, and to think that you yourself might be the next, and that it was almost sure to happen if you did not get some sleep soon. But it was worse to find a man near you going, and have to rank him with the other insane men.

I began talking with Mallen about what would happen if there were more lunatics than sane men, and he said then the sane men would be the crazy ones, because he said the only thing that makes one man sane is that there are more like him than there are insane men. He said whichever kind was in the majority was the normal or sane kind, it did not make any difference which. It began to get too deep for me, so I quit arguing. But Mallen kept it up until I told him it looked as if he were going, too, and then he shut up. I think it was not good for us to talk or think much about it, or we would have gone off.

That night two of the garbies got out of the fiddley, somehow, into No. 3 hold, and brought back some bologna and leaf tobacco. I got hold of quite a bit of the leaves, rolled them, dampened the roll, corded it and let it dry. Two days later I had a fine twist, hard as a bullet. That is a trick I had picked up from the Limeys. If the Germans knew we had had this stuff they would have strung us up, I am sure.

The days passed like that, with nothing to do but suffer, and starve and freeze. It got colder and colder, and all we could wrap ourselves in was the coal. We began to speculate on where we were. It was not till later that an old skipper in our lot told us that we had rounded the northern coast of Iceland.

Now and again some of our men in the fiddley would shout, "British cruiser on the horizon!" and we would shake like leaves, and sing and dance round, and shout ourselves hoarse, until the Germans had to shoot down on us to make us quiet. But no cruiser ever came. It seemed like months when only days passed.

Finally, one day a lad yelled "Land!" and we all dived for the fiddley like wild men, and those who could get near looked out, and sure enough! there was the coast of Norway, very ragged and rocky and covered with snow. We thought it was all over, and that we would be landed at Bergen. Then there was the usual running round and yelling on deck, and we were not so sure we would be landed, and very suddenly it got colder than ever.

I was in the fiddley, aching to get out, and ready for anything that might happen, when the door opened suddenly and Badewitz grabbed me, and asked me in English whether I was a quartermaster. I said yes, and he pulled me by the arm to a cabin. I did not know what was going to happen, but he took an oilskin from the wall and told me to put it on.

Two sailors were there also, and they put life-belts on, and then I was more puzzled than ever, and scared, too, because I thought maybe they were going to throw me overboard, though what that had to do with being a quartermaster I could not see.

But they conveyed me up to the bridge and told

me to take the wheel. What their idea was I do not know. Possibly they wanted a non-combatant at the wheel in case they were overhauled by a neutral vessel. We were going full speed at the time, but as soon as I took the wheel she cut down to half speed, and stayed that way for half an hour. Then up to full speed again.

Pretty soon there was a tramp steamer on the starboard bow, and almost before I saw it, there were two more sentries on each side of me, prodding me with their revolvers, and warning me to keep on the course. They wore civilian clothes.

Then we went through the Skager Rack and Cattegat, the narrow strips of water which lead to the Baltic and we were only a mile from shore, with vessels all about us. It would have been easy for me to signal what our ship was and who were aboard, but they had six sentries right on my neck all the time to keep me from it. I never wanted to do anything worse in my life than jump overboard or signal. But I would have been shot down before I had more than started to do either, so I just stayed with the wheel.

We were nearing one of the Danish islands in the Baltic when we sighted a tug. She began to smoke up and blow her siren. The sailors got very excited and ran about in crazy style, and Badewitz began shouting more orders than they could get away with. The sentries left me and ran with the

rest of the Fritzes to the boat deck and started to lower one of the lifeboats. But Badewitz was right on their heels, and kicked the whole crowd in great style, roaring like a bull all the time.

I left the wheel and ran to the end of the bridge to jump overboard. But the minute I let go of the wheel the vessel fell off the right course, and they noticed it, and Badewitz sent five of them up on the bridge and three others to the side with their revolvers to shoot me if I should reach the water. I think if I had had any rope to lash the wheel with I could have got away and they would not have known it.

When the five sailors reached the bridge one of them jumped for the cord and gave our siren five long blasts in answer to the tug. The tug was about to launch a torpedo and we whistled just in time. One of our men was looking from the fiddley, and he saw the Huns making for the lifeboat, so he got two or three others and they all yelled together, "Don't let them get away!" thinking that they would get the boat over and leave the ship, and trying to yell loud enough for the tug to hear them. Badewitz took this man and two or three others, whether they were the ones who yelled or not, and put them in irons. I thought there was going to be a mutiny, but it did not come off, and I am not sure what the Huns were so excited about.

The other four sailors who came up on the

bridge did not touch me, but just covered me with their revolvers. That was the way with them—they would not touch us unless Badewitz was there or they had bayonets. The old bull himself came up on the bridge after he had collected a few men, threw me around quite a bit and kicked me down from the bridge and slammed me into the coal bunkers. I felt pretty sore, as you can imagine, and disappointed and pretty low generally, but when I sailed through the fiddley and landed on the coal I had to laugh, no matter how bad I felt, for there was Mallen just finding his monocle again. Every time you saw him he was losing it or having it brought back to him.

After a while we heard the anchor chains rattling through on their way to get wet, and we pulled up. Then every German ship in the Baltic came to look us over, I guess. They opened up the hatch covers, and the Hun garbies and gold-stripes came aboard and looked down at us, and spat all they could on us, and called us all the different kinds of swine in creation. They had them lined up and filing past the hatchways—all of them giving us a glance-over in turn. Maybe they sold tickets for this show—it would be like the Huns.

At first we were trying to get out from under the hatch openings and the shower of spittle, but some Limey officer sang out, "Britishers all! Don't give way!" and we stood still and let them spit their

damned German lungs out before we would move for them, and some Cornishmen began singing their song about Trelawney. So we made out that we did not know such a thing as a German ever lived.

We got better acquainted with German spittle later, and, believe me, they are great little spitters, not much on distance or accuracy, but quick in action and well supplied with ammunition. Spitting on prisoners is the favourite indoor and outdoor sport for Germans, men and women alike.

When the show was over, they drove us up on deck and put us to work throwing the salt pork and canned goods into two German mine-layers. While we were at it, a Danish patrol boat came out and moored alongside us, and some of her officers came aboard and saw us. They knew we were prisoners of war, and they knew that a vessel carrying prisoners of war must not remain in neutral waters for over twenty-four hours.

That night two men named Barney Hill and Joyce, the latter a gunner from the *Mount Temple*, sneaked up on deck and aft to the poop deck. There was a pair of wooden stairs leading to the top of the poop deck, and Joyce and Hill lifted it and got over the side with a rope to it. The two of them got down into the water all right, but Joyce let out a yell because the water was so cold, and a German patrol boat heard him and flashed a searchlight. They picked up Joyce at once, but Barney was making



good headway and was almost free when they dragged him in. They took them up on the patrol boat, and when they put them back on the *Yarrowdale*, Badewitz knocked them about and put them in irons. Then he began to shoot at their feet with his revolver, a sailor standing by to hand him another revolver when the first one was empty. After that he gashed their faces with the barrel of the revolver and shouted, "I'm Badewitz! I'm the man who fooled the English!" and shot at them afresh.

When the men were searched papers were found under their shirts wrapped in oilskin and written in English, French, Italian and Spanish. These they were supposed to take to different consuls if they got ashore, and all the notes had different signatures. I do not know where they got the paper, but they used coal to write with. The oilskin they tore out of the coat which Badewitz had given me when I took the wheel and which they forgot to take away from me, because they were so busy with their boots when they slammed me into the bunkers again. When I saw that they had brought Hill and Joyce on board again, I threw the oilskin away, so that they should not find out I had given them the wrappers for the notes.

All the while the sailors were celebrating, drinking and eating and yelling, as usual, and the whistles on all the German ships were blowing, and they were having a great time. After about thirty

hours we left, being escorted by a mine-layer and a mine-sweeper. I asked a German garby if that was the whole German navy, and he looked surprised and did not know I was kidding him, and said no. Then I said, "So the English got all the rest, did they?" and he handed me one on the mouth with his bayonet hilt, so I quit chaffing him. One of them hit Mallen, too, so Mallen watched for him with a lump of coal, waiting for him to pass the fiddley door, but he never came.

We saw rows and rows of mines, and the German sailors pointed out what they said were H.M.S. *Lion* and *Nomad*, but I do not know whether they were the same ships that were in the Jutland battle or not.\* Finally we landed at Swinemünde just as the bells were ringing the old year out and the new year in. We were a fine dish of blackbirds to hand the Kaiser for a New Year's present, believe me.

They mustered us up on deck, and each of us got a cup of water for our New Year's spree. Then we saw we were in for it, and all hope vanished, but we were glad to be released from our hole, because we had been prisoners since December 10th—three days on the *Moewe* and eighteen on the *Yarrowdale*, and the coal was not any softer than when we first sat on it.

\* The *Nomad* was one of the British destroyers sunk in the battle. The *Lion*, Admiral Beatty's flagship, came out of the fight with its due quota of honourable scars.

So we began singing, “ Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile, boys, smile. What’s the use of worrying? It’s never worth while,” and so forth. They made us shut up, but not before we asked ourselves if we were downhearted, and everybody yelled “ No ! ”

And that is how we gave our regards to Swinemünde.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### “PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES”

WE arrived at Swinemünde, on the east shore, and after we had had our drink of water and had been driven back into the bunkers, Badewitz went across to the west side in a launch with Joyce and Hill and a guard of sailors. They were to be shot next morning, with some others, at a public shooting-festival. The rest of us wrapped ourselves in lumps of coal as best we could and tried to sleep.

In the morning crowds of Germans came aboard and were turned loose on the boxes in the hold. It was a sight to see them rip off the covers and gobble the salami and other stuff that we carried. Table manners are not needed where there is no table, I guess, but if you had seen them, you would say these Germans did not even have trough manners. I have seen hogs that were more finicky.

While they were at it, hand to hand with the chow, giving and receiving terrible punishment, we prisoners were mustered on deck, counted, kicked on to tugs and transferred to the west bank, where the mob was waiting for us. My wounds, as you can imagine, were in a pretty bad state by this time, and

were getting more painful every minute, so that I found I was growing ugly and anxious for an argument. I knew that if I stayed in this mood I would probably never come out alive, for there is every chance you could pick a quarrel while you are a prisoner that will mean freedom for you—but only the freedom of going West, which I was not anxious to try.

I had been delirious a bit, I think, and dreamed a good deal about Murray and Brown. Once I saw myself crucified, too, and although I would not let myself get superstitious, it seemed to me that it was all I could expect. I do not know what that feeling should be called, but it worked out like this: Three of us had started; two had gone West; would not all three go West? And the two who had gone were crucified; would not the third go that way, too? Sometimes it seemed almost wrong that I should ever get away—almost like deserting Murray and Brown. Then I would reason that all that was foolish, and I would say, with the Limeys: “There are just two ways of looking at it: either you die or you do not die. If you die, you are dead. If you do not die, you will have to some time. Either way, you are safe. So why choose?”

Then I would argue that if you could not help yourself, the only thing to do was to put on a bold front and pretend that you liked your medicine. So I would say, “Carry on, Chink!” and go about as

though I did not give a damn. But I never could handle myself so that the Huns should think I did not mind their rough stuff, and I guess I was pretty saucy. When I think of it now, it is a wonder I did not get it for being too cheeky, if for nothing else.

When we got near the west bank, on the tugs, we could see that we were up against a battle with our arms tied. Over half the crowd was women and children, I should say, and the rest were labourers, and old civvies, reserve soldiers, and loafers generally. We could see the spit experts—the spit snipers, deployed to the front, almost.

As we went ashore the bombardment began, and we were not only under fire of spit, if you could call it that, but also of stones and bottles and sticks and most anything that could be thrown. I discovered then why so many of our major league ball players have German names. As we were marched along, the crowd tramped along the street with us, heaving bricks and spitting and ringing the changes on “schweinhund.” We had an armed guard, of course, but all they did was to guard the crowd when some of us could not stand it and tried to get back at some of the mob. In a civilised country, as you probably know, prisoners are protected from mobs by their guards.

All this time, “lest you forget,” we had no shoes and no clothing—only what had once been our underwear. It is all right to be a Coney Island snowbird

and pose around in your bathing suit in the drifts, because you are in good condition and, last but not least, because you don't have to do it. Think out the other side of it for yourself.

They marched us into a field where there was nothing much but guns and ammunition and snow, and set us up in something like skirmishing order. We stood there for some time, and then we saw a lot of Huns with the new long rifles coming towards us, yelling just as they did in battle, and we thought sure we were being used for practice targets. • It is a good thing they halted and stopped yelling when they did, or we would all have started for them to fight it out, for we were not the kind that likes to be butchered with hands in the air, and we would have been glad of a chance to get a few of them before they got us. But they did halt, and then surrounded us, and drove us away through swamps and woods and shallow water or slush. The women followed, too, and there were plenty of bricks and spit left. Women as well as men are the same the world over, they say. I wonder! You can just picture the women of, say, Rockland, Maine, following a crowd of German prisoners that way, can't you? I fancy not. But of course the women of Rockland are pretty crude—no kultur at all—and Gott never commissioned President Wilson to take the lid off the strafe-pot.

They marched us along the docks, and it looked

as though the whole German navy was tied up at Swinemünde. We saw many of the ships we had heard about, among them being the famous *Vulcan*, the mother ship for submarines. There were many sailors loafing along the docks, and they gave the women a hand with their day's work. They were no better with a brick, but they had more ammunition when it came to spitting. One of them tripped a young boy by the name of Kelly and, as you would never doubt, Kelly picked up a stone and crashed the sailor with it. Kelly was then bayoneted twice in the left leg. We began singing our popular favourite, "Pack up your troubles, etc.," and when they heard us, how the swine stared!

Then they took us past the German soldiers' quarters. The men were at rifle practice, and I guess all of us thought how handy we would be as targets. But when we got near them they quit practising and crowded around us, yelling "'Raus! Zurück!"

Finally we got to the top of the hill, and were halted near the barracks while an officer read the martail law to us. At least we thought maybe that was it. Merry wags, these Germans are. They *will* have their little joke. I do not know why it is, but there is something funny about the German language to most people who are not Germans. I have known sailors who had heard almost every language in the world, from Chinese to Finnish, and they never could help laughing when they heard Fritz begin to swal-



low his palate and cough, which is what you must do to speak Deutsch.

Thus many of us had all we could do to keep from laughing, and, to make things worse, Mallen, who stood behind me, monocle and all, began whispering a story to me—which was old stuff, as I had heard it before—about two women coming out of church in Hull, and one of them said the minister had preached that the only way the Allies could win the war was to pray to God for victory. The other woman butted in and said, “But can’t the Germans do that, too?” and the first woman retorted, “Yes, but would He understand them?”

The lads near him began laughing, and farther up the line some more men saw Mallen was doing something, and he looked so funny standing there in his underwear and one sock and a monocle that they began laughing, too. So one fellow snickered, and then another, and pretty soon the whole gang of us were just roaring. You would have thought we were at a burlesque show.

At first the Germans did not know what to make of it. It was not their idea of how prisoners should act. And then they got very angry, because when a German cannot understand anything it makes him mad, and if it is an invention, or something like that, he has to steal it before he can calm down. But if it is only men that puzzle him—“’Raus!”

The officer shouted around for a while, and then

the sentries shouted, too, and that made it funnier, and we laughed all the harder. But by and by they got busy with bayonets on every fifth or sixth man, and that spoiled the joke. So we stopped laughing. Then the officer started bawling at us until he saw that we were likely to break out again, so he stopped. Then he asked, in English of a kind, and in German, whether any of us understood Deutsch. I presume it was in accordance with the German custom that this routine had to be gone through with the prisoners.

So, finally, we got what he wanted into our heads, but not a man budged. The officer became very mad then, and it looked as though we might be in for rough weather. Now I had picked up a few words in several languages, including Russian, and, of course, French, but I did not know enough German to damn the Kaiser in, which is about all the use I ever thought I would have for the gargon.

But I imagined that if the martial law were not read to us, we would never get into the barracks, which could not be any colder than it was outside, so I stepped out. I was supposed to be a civilian, but the officer spotted me for a man who had seen some military service, and he tried to find out what army I had been in. He learned everything about me but the truth.

Then he read the law to me, and I did not get one word of it. When he had finished he told me

to translate it to the men ; at least, I supposed that was what he wanted. So they conducted me in front of our men between four sentries and I opened up.

The first thing I said to our boys was that if they did not want to see me shot, would they please not laugh, only I put it stronger. Because I fancied that I probably looked pretty funny as an interpreter, and that if they laughed the Germans would think I was kidding them or else not playing up to the job, and that would mean the finish of my career not only as a language expert but as everything else.

Then I said that if the boys wanted to get on with the Germans they would have to cut out the rough stuff, and that the reason I was pulling this line of talk was so we could get into the barracks. I then said that the law was so long that I would have to keep on talking for a few minutes, otherwise the Huns would know I had not repeated the meaning of all of it, and I begged them not to laugh again at whatever I might say, and to pretend that they were understanding what the officer wanted them to.

Now I think this officer knew enough English to gather what I was driving at, but he let me go on, because it would amount to the same thing in the long run. So I went on, trying to talk about something and yet not make the men laugh. And they would nod their heads occasionally and pretend that they were catching the officer's drift. But Mallen and his monocle almost wrecked me, he looked so

funny, and I had to move a foot or two so as to bring another man between him and my eyes. I do not know just what I said, but finally I thought I had talked about as long as it would take to explain the German law in English, and I shut up and turned to the officer. He took me back to the line. Then a Cockney, who seemed to think I really knew German or had some influence with the officer, told me to ask him whether we would get a meal in the barracks. I was afraid to do it, so I told the Londoner that the officer had said to me that we would be fed if we behaved, and the Cockney was surprised that I had not told all the men that. So I explained to him that the officer had told me not to mention that, because he wanted to see how the men would act. That satisfied my Cockney, and he let it go at that.

Finally they let us into the barracks, and the first thing we saw was a great big pile of hay. That looked good to us and we made a rush and dived into it. But the Huns told us to take the hay out and throw it in the middle of the road. They had to use force before we would do it. We gave in, however, and started to carry it out. Some of the young boys were crying, and I do not blame them much.

But one of the lads tried to hide some of the hay behind a box and was caught doing it, and two sentries clouted him from one end of the barracks to the other. His nose was broken and his face mashed to a jelly. But there was nothing we could do, so

we just wandered up and down the barracks, about as we did between decks on the *Moewe*, trying to keep warm.

While this Marathon was on we heard a whistle blown very loudly, and when we looked out we saw a wagon piled up with old tin cans. Then we were told to form single file, walk out to the wagon and each get a can for himself. Every man had to take the first he laid his hands on, and many of us got rusty ones with holes in them. So that about half an hour later, when we received barley coffee, and all we had to drink it from was the cans, lots of the men had to drink theirs almost in one gulp or lose half of it.

The barracks were very dirty and stank horribly, and the men were still not even half clothed. We all looked filthy and smelled that way, and where the coal dust had rubbed off we were very pale. And all of us were starved-looking. Every time we wanted to go to the urinal we had to tell a sentry, and he would send us outside to a very shallow trench, dug too near the barracks, and not covered at all except for narrow planks thrown across it at intervals. You could see that the Huns were not anxious about us as far as sanitation went.

About eleven o'clock that morning the whistle blew again, and we came out and were given an aluminium spoon and a dish apiece. Then we cheered up and saw corned beef and cabbage for

ourselves. An hour later they drilled us through the snow to the canteen. When we got there we stood in line until at least half-past twelve, and then the Germans shouted, "Nichts zu essen." But we did not know what that meant, so we just hung round there and waited. Then they started shouting, "Zurück! Zurück!" and drove us back to the barracks.

Later we heard the words "nichts zu essen!" (or "nix essen," as Mallen said) so often that we thought probably they meant "no eats." We had our reasons for thinking so, too. Those words, and "zurück" and "'raus," were practically all we did hear, except, of course, various kinds of "schweinhund."

It was awful to see the men when we got back to the barracks. Some of the boys from the *Georgic*, not much over twelve years old, were almost crazy, but even the older men were crying, many of them. It was nothing but torture all the time. They opened all the windows and doors in the barracks, and then we could not heat the room with our bodies. When we started to move about to keep warm they fired a few shots at us. I do not know whether they hit anyone or not; we had got so that we did not pay attention to things like that. But it stopped us and we had to stand still. The Huns thought we would take the rifles from the sentries and use them, too.

I never saw a yellower crowd of people in my life. I do not mean people. I wish I could publish what I really do mean.

We had stoves in the barracks, but no coal or wood to burn. Many boxes were piled up there, but they belonged to the Germans. We would have burned them if we could, but the Huns made us carry them out across the road. They weighed about 150 pounds apiece, and we were so weak that it was all two men could do to budge them. And we had to carry them; they would not let us roll them. We were so cold and hungry that even that exercise did not warm us.

About 2.30 the whistle blew again, and the Huns picked out a few men and took them down the road. We could not understand why, but they came back about three o'clock, all of them with bread in their arms. They were chewing away at it when they had a chance. Whenever the sentries were not looking they would bite at it like a fish going after a worm. Each man carried five loaves.

When they reached the barracks the sentries made them put the bread on the floor, and then, with their bayonets, the sentries cut each loaf once down the centre lengthwise and four times across, which meant ten men to a loaf about the size of an ordinary ten-cent loaf in the United States now. They gave each of us a piece a little larger than a safety-match box.

The bread was hard and dark, and I really think they made it from trees. It had just exactly the same smell that the dirt around trees has. Mallen called it mud as soon as he tried it, and that was the name we had for it ever afterwards.

We filed past the sentries single file to obtain our ration of this mud, and there was no chance of getting in line twice, for we had to keep on filing until we were out in the road, and stand there in the snow to eat it. We could not go back to the barracks until every man had been served.

Our meals were like this: A can of barley coffee in the morning; cabbage soup, so called, at noon; a tenth of a loaf of bread at 3 P.M. That was our menu day in and day out, the Kaiser's birthday, Lincoln's, May Day, or any other time.

The cabbage soup was a great idea. We called it shadow soup, because the boys claimed they made it by hanging a cabbage over a barrel of water and letting the shadow fall on the water. We pretended, too, that if you found any cabbage in it you could take your dish back for a second helping. But I never saw anybody get more than one dishful. Truly, it was nothing but spoiled water.

We tried to go to sleep that night, but there were so many sentries around us—and those of us who were not sick were wounded—that I do not think a man of us really slept. After a while I asked a sentry if I could go to the convenience, but



for some reason he would not let me. I had different ideas about it, so I stood near the door, and when he turned his back out I went and round the corner of the barracks.

But one of the sentries there saw me and blew his whistle, and a guard of eight came up from somewhere and grabbed me. I tried to explain, but it was no use, because every time I said a word it meant another clout over the ear, so finally I gave it up.

Then they escorted me across the road to the officers' quarters. There were three officers there, and each asked me questions about all kinds of things, but never once mentioned my running out of the barracks. Then they gave the sentries some commands, and four of the sentries took me out and over to the barbed wire fence. There they tied me, face to the fence, arms over my head, and hands and feet lashed to the wire, and with a rope round my waist, too. I thought then that my foreboding had come true, and that I would be crucified like Murray and Brown.

They posted a sentry there in addition to the regular guards, and every time he walked past me he would kick me or spit on me, or do both.

One time he kicked me so hard that a prong of the barbed wire gashed me over the left eye—the only one I could see with—and when the blood ran into my eye it blinded me. I thought both eyes were gone then, and I hoped they would shoot me.

It seemed to me that I had got my share by this time without losing the other eye, and if it was gone, I wanted to go, too.

I could not put up my hand to feel where the prong had jabbed me, and it kept on bleeding and smarting. I had on practically no clothing, you remember. The wounds in my thigh had opened, and it was bitterly cold and windy. So you can picture to yourself how gay and care-free I was.

When I had been there for an hour and a half they untied me from the wire, and I rolled over on my back. They kicked me until I had to stand up, but I fell down again, and all the kicking in Germany could not have brought me to my feet. I was just all in. So they blew their whistles and the sentries in the barracks awakened two of the boys, who came and carried me in.

All the time the sentries were yelling, "Gott strafe England!" and "Schweinhund!" until you would have thought they were in a battle. What their idea was I do not know.

The boys had a little water in a can, and one of them tore off part of the sleeve of his undershirt. So they washed the gash and bandaged me. Believe me, I was glad when I could see again. I was so tired and worn out that I went to sleep at once, and did not wake up until they were giving us our barley coffee next morning.

## CHAPTER XIX

### GERMAN PRISON CAMPS

A FEW days after I had been lashed to the barbed wire fence some German officers came to the barracks, and one of them, who spoke very good English, said: "All neutrals who were on unarmed ships step out." Only a few stepped out.

Then he called for *all* the neutrals, and the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Brazilians, and Spaniards stepped out. But when I did he said, "No, not Americans. Americans are not neutral. America supplies our enemies with food and ammunitions." He raised his fist and I thought he was going to hit me, but instead he gave me a shove that caused me to fall and cut my head. Then the sentries pushed me over with the British and the French.

After that they took the Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes to separate barracks, and gave them clothes and beds and the same rations as the German soldiers. When I saw this I protested and said I was a neutral, too, and ought to have the same treatment as the Scandinavians. They took me to the officers again, kicked me about, and swore at me, and

the only answer I got was that America would suffer for all she had done for the Allies. Then I was sent back to the barracks again.

Next day about 1 o'clock they took us from the barracks and drove us through the swamps. The men began to fall one by one, some crying or swearing, but most of them going along without a word. Those who went down were smashed on the head with rifle butts or belts.

Finally we arrived at a little railroad station, and had to stand in the snow for over an hour while the engine ran up and down the tracks hooking on cars. When at length we got in the cars we were frozen stiff. I could hardly walk, and some of the boys simply could not move without intense pain.

They loaded twelve men into each compartment, and detailed a guard of six men to each car. The windows were all smashed, and everything about the cars were dirty.

The sentries in our compartment took some bread out of their knapsacks and began to nibble it. They also had tobacco—plenty of it. And all this they did just to torture us. They could hardly eat the bread, because they were not hungry at all. When they had showed it to us and pretended to eat it, and had laughed all they wanted to, they put it back in their knapsacks and started smoking.

The train stopped at every little station along the line, and the engineer always started up again

with awful jerks. Sometimes he would jerk the whole train two or three times before he got going again, and, from what the sentries said, we thought he was doing it on purpose. You would not think the Huns would go to all that trouble to annoy us, but it is a fact that they think of everything they can to torture one.

Finally the train stopped at a town named Alt-Damm, and there was a mob of women and children around, as usual, ready for us with bricks and spit. They stoned us through the car windows, and laughed and jeered at us, but by this time we were so used to it that we did not mind much. Only, every now and then some fellow would get more than he could stand, and either talk back or make a pass at somebody. Then he would have it—either a bayonet through the arm or leg, or a bash on the head with a gun butt.

For the last few stations before we reached Alt-Damm the engineer had not jerked the train much, and some of the men had climbed up on the little shelves in the cars, which are meant for baggage, but which the men were sleeping on. As we pulled out of Alt-Damm the train gave a worse jerk than usual, and almost all the men fell down to the floor. One of them broke his arm at the elbow. These shelves are just about as roomy as the hammocks on Pullman cars, so you can see exactly what and how much we had in the way of comfort when such small

shelves looked as good to the men as bunks. When the sentries learned that this man had broken his arm they laughed consumedly, and one of them went forward to tell the driver. Then we were sure he had done it on purpose. We pulled a strap from one of the car windows and tightened up the broken arm, but the man was in great pain, and became delirious shortly afterwards.

When we had pulled up at the station in Stettin one of the men jumped out of the car window to get some snow to eat, because we had received absolutely no water, to say nothing of food, on the way. A sentry saw him as he climbed out of the car window but, being yellow, did not go for him, and just stood where he was and yelled until four or five more Huns came up. The man kept going until he reached the snow. While they were still running towards him he ate several mouthfuls and made snowballs to carry back to the rest of us.

When the men in the cars saw the sentries going towards him they all tried to get out of the window at once, and there would have been a great little argument, because the men were desperate, and these Huns, like the rest of them, were yellow. But the man started back to the car as fast as he could go, and the other men were stuck in the windows and had to get back into the car to let him in. The Huns got him just as he was about to climb back through the window, and bayoneted him twice in

the arm. But he held on to the snowballs and divided them among us. The sentries came into the car and took the snow from us, though, and threw it away.

After an eighteen hours' ride, without food or drink, we arrived at Neustrelitz. It was raining as we pulled in. As we went up the grade to the town we could see lights about a mile away, and we concluded that that was the camp. The rain stopped and we remained in the cars for some time. Then after a while we knew our new guards were coming; long before we could see them, we could hear the racket they made. Somehow, a German cannot do anything ship-shape and neatly, but always has to have a lot of noise and running around and general confusion. Four-footed swine are more orderly in their habits than the Huns.

When they came up we were driven from the cars and marched up the road to the camp. When we got near the German barracks we were halted and counted again, and made to stand there, shivering like leaves, for at least an hour after they had finished counting us. At last they placed us in barracks, and those who could went to sleep.

There were about forty barracks in the Limey group at Neustrelitz and two large Zeppelin sheds. The barracks were just like those at Swinemünde—at least, they were no better. Along the sides of

the rooms were long shelves or benches, and every three feet were boards set in grooves. The shelves were what we had to sleep on, and the boards in the grooves divided them up so that only a certain number of men could use each bench.

The following morning we nearly dropped dead when the Huns pulled in a large wagon full of clothing. We thought we never would have anything to wear but our underclothes. They issued to each man a pair of trousers, thin model, a thin coat about like the seersucker or Indian cotton coats some people wear in the summer, an overcoat about as warm as if it had been made of cigarette papers, a skull cap and a pair of shoes, which were a day's labour to carry around. Not one of us received socks, shirts, or underwear.

The toe was cut from the right shoe of the pair I received, and as my wounds were in the right thigh and my leg had stiffened considerably and become very sore, I got pretty anxious, because there was nothing but slush under foot, and I was afraid I might lose my leg. So I thought that if I went to the commander and complained I might get a good shoe. I hesitated about it at first, but finally made up my mind and went to see him.

I told him that it was slushy outside, and that the water ran through the hole in my shoe and made it bad for my whole leg, which was wounded. He examined the shoe, and looked at the open toe for



some time, and I thought he was going to put up an argument but would give in finally.

Then he asked me what I wanted. I thought that was plain enough to see, but I said just as easily as I could that I wanted a shoe without a hole in the toe.

“So the water runs into it, does it?” he said. “Well, my advice to you is to get a knife, cut a hole in the heel, and let the water out.” All the other swine in the room laughed very loud at this, and I guess this Fritz thought he was a great comedian. But somehow or other, it did not strike me as so funny that I should laugh, and I was able, after quite a struggle, to keep from even snickering. It was a harder struggle than that to keep from doing something else, though!

Our meals were about the same as at Swinemünde—the bread was just as muddy, the barley coffee just as rank, and the soup just as cabbageless. The second morning after we had had our barley coffee one of the sentries came to our barracks, which was number 7-B, and gave each of us an envelope and a sheet of writing-paper. Then he told us to write to anybody we wanted to, after which he chalked on the door in big letters—

### KRIEGSGEFANGENENLAGER

and told us it was the return address. We were all surprised, and asked each other where on earth we

were, because we had thought we were in Neustrelitz. After a while, we learned that it means "Prisoner-of-War-Camp." At first, however, many of us thought it was the name of the town, and we took to calling it The Brewery, because the name ended in Lager. Whatever beer was brewed there was not for us, though.

I noticed that all the time he was writing the word and giving us the stationery, the sentry was laughing and having a great time with his own little self, but I supposed he was just acting German, and that nothing was important about it.

We were all mortally anxious to get a chance to let our people know where we were, and each man thought a long time about what he would say, and whom he would write to, before he ever started to write. Each man wanted to say all he could in the small space he had, and to let his friends know how badly the Huns were treating us without saying it in so many words, because we knew the Germans would censor the letters, and it would go hard with anyone who complained much. So most of the men said they were having a great time and were treated very well, and spread it on so thick that their friends would infer that they were lying because they had to.

One fellow had a better idea than that, though. He had been in jail in Portsmouth, in England, for three months, for assaulting a constable, and he had had a pretty rough time. So he wrote a pal of his

that he had been captured by the Germans, but that everything was going along pretty well. In fact, he said, the only other trip he had ever been on, where he had a better time, was the three months' vacation he had spent in Portsmouth two years before, which he thought the friend would remember. He said that trip was better than this one, so the friend could conclude for himself how pleasant this one was. Everybody thought this was a great idea, but unfortunately not all of us had been in jail, so we could not all use it. Which was just as well, however, because the Germans would be suspicious if all of us compared this vacation with others.

Some of the men had nobody they could write to, and others did not know their friends' addresses, so they would write letters to friends of the other men, and sign them with their mates' nicknames. In this way Mallen got letters written to three people he knew, one signed Mallen, another *Mal* Brown or Black or Smith, and the third, "Swipe" Robinson or Jones. "Swipe" was a nickname that he said he used to have. He told about his monocle and asked for a whole pair of glasses in the first letter, for tobacco in the second, and something else in the third, and, whatever supplies the letters fetched, he promised to give to the men who let him use their last names and their stationery.

As soon as a man had finished his letter, he had to go out to the centre of the camp, where they had

built a raised platform. There the sentries took the letters, and the men formed round the square. There were officers on the platform reading the letters. We thought they read them there in the open, before us, so that we would know they were not tampering with the letters, and we believed the heavens would fall if they were getting so unkultured as that.

By and by all the men had finished their letters and turned them over to the officers, who read them. And then we saw why the sentry laughed.

The officers tore up every one of the letters. They were anxious that we would see them do it, so that none of us might have any hope that our friends would get word.

But we said to ourselves that, if it was information they wanted, they had as much as was good for them, which was none at all, because I do not think one letter in the lot had a single word of truth in it. But we were very angry and pretty low after that, because it showed the Huns still had plenty of kultur left, after all, and we knew there was rough treatment ahead of us. Also, some of the men were sore because they had wasted their time thinking up different ways of hinting to their friends about the real state of affairs, and all for nothing. Mallen was about ready to tear his hair out. Why they should worry about time, I could not see. Time was the only thing we had plenty of and I, for one, thought we were going to have still more of it.

Going back to the barracks we tried to sing "Pack up your troubles," but there was not much pep in it. We were not downhearted, though: at least, we said we were not.

I saw L29, a very large Zeppelin, flying low over the field at Neustrelitz, and I would have liked to have a crack at it with an anti-aircraft gun. It made an awful racket, like everything else German, and one of the sentries was very much to the cheer-oh when he saw and heard it. He seemed to think it was great stuff. He said it would give somebody hell-for-breakfast, or words to that effect, and finished up by saying, "By and by, England 'kaput,' " which means "ruined." But I have learned since that L29 was brought down by the English before it "kaputted" them very much.

## CHAPTER XX

### KULTUR—THE REAL STUFF

NEUSTRELITZ was mainly for Russian prisoners, and neither British nor French soldiers were interned there—only sailors of the merchant marine such as the men I was with. The Russians were given far worse treatment than any other prisoners. This was for two reasons, as near as I could make out. One was that the Russian would stand almost anything, whereas the British and French could only be goaded to a certain point, and beyond that lay trouble. The other reason was that the Russians sent German prisoners to Siberia or, at least, so the Huns thought, and Fritz hates the cold. So, hating the Russians, and realising that they were used to being under-dogs, Fritz picked on them and bullied them in a way that the rest of us would not have stood. We would have rushed them and gone West with bayonets first.

One of the Russians told me that at the beginning of the war there were no barracks at Neustrelitz. There were only barbed wire entanglements surrounded by a high fence, and into this bare place thousands of prisoners were driven. All their

clothes were taken from them, and they were compelled to sleep on the ground without any covering. After they had been living in this way for quite a while, the Germans took them into the forest, where they cut down trees, hauled them to the camp and built the barracks we were now in.

He said that in the early days, while they were at work on the barracks, the Germans put them in stables from which manure had been removed, and that whenever it rained the floors would be nothing but stinking pools. While some were at work the others had to stay in these stables, and all had to sleep in them. They also dug holes in the ground about six feet deep for protection against the weather. The Germans would not let them have any tools, so they used pieces of wood and in many cases only their hands. The dug-outs frequently caved in on them.

The barracks were made of spruce, and were about ninety feet long and twenty-five feet wide, and you can take it from me that, as carpenters, whoever made them were fine farmers. There were cracks in them which you could have driven an automobile through. When we were there, each barracks had a stove in the centre, a good stove and a big one, but at first it was of no use to us, because the Huns would not give us coal or wood for it. But after shivering for a while we began ripping the boards out of the barracks, and taking

the dividing boards from the benches that we used for beds.

Later, they gave each of us a mattress filled with wood shavings, and a blanket that was about as warm as a pane of glass. The mattresses were placed on the ground in the barracks, which were very damp, and after three or four days the shavings would begin to rot and the mattress to stink. In order to keep warm we slept as closely together as we could, which caused our various diseases to spread rapidly.

When we were receiving our rations the sentries would offer us an extra ration if we would take a lash from their belts. We were so hungry that many and many a man would go up and take a whack on any part of his body from the heavy leather belts with brass tongue and buckle, just to get a little more "shadow" soup, or barley coffee, or mud bread.

One morning the sentries picked out ten men from our barracks, of whom I was one, and conveyed us to a field near the canteen. There was a large tank in the field and we had to pump water into it. It was very cold, and we were weak and sick, so we would fall one after another, not caring whether we ever got up or not. Fritz would smash those who fell with his rifle butt. We asked for gloves, because our hands were freezing, but all we got was "Nichts."

After we had been there for about an hour and a



half, one of our men became very sick, so that I thought he was going to die and, when he fell over, I reported it to a sentry. The sentry came over, saw him lying in the snow, yelled, “Schwein, nicht krank!” (sick), grabbed him by the shoulder, and pulled him all the way across the field to the office of the camp commander. Then he was placed in the guard-house, where he remained for two days. The next thing we knew the Russians had been ordered to make a box, and were being marched to the guard-house to put him in it and bury him.

I went over to the guard-house at the time, and struck up quite a friendship with one of the Russians. I would talk to him in Russian, and he would try to reply in English, because he wanted to practise it. After a while we would exchange parts—I would talk in English, and he in Russian, so that we would also get practice in understanding each other’s language.

He said he did not know how long he had been there, but that it had been long enough, and also that when he was taken prisoner he was transferred from camp to camp so many times that he had lost count, and that each time he and the other prisoners were without food on the journeys, which they had to make on foot. He said that some of the marches had been six days long and one was nine, and that they were not given any food at all on the way, but had to live on whatever weeds or vegetables they

could find as they went along, or take when the guards were not looking. Whenever a prisoner was caught taking food from a field he was killed immediately. He said that those who could not hold out would fall on the road, and that the next guard who came along on the flank of the column would simply stick his bayonet into the prisoner and leave him there.

There were two brothers in the party of prisoners, and when one of them became very sick and weak the other carried him on his shoulder. A guard saw it and killed them both with his rifle butt.

Another thing at Neustrelitz that was very hard to stand was the pretty habit the Huns had of coming up to the barbed wire and teasing us as though we were wild animals in a cage. Sometimes there would be crowds of people lined along the wire throwing things at us, and spitting, and having a great time generally. It was harder than ever when a family party would arrive, with Vater und Mutter, and maybe Grosvater und Grosmutter and all the little Boche children, because, as you probably know, the Germans take food with them whenever they go on a party, no matter what kind, and they would stand there and stare at us like the boobies they were, eating all the time—and *we* so hungry that we could have eaten ourselves almost. After they had stared a while, they would begin to feel more at home, and then would start the throwing

and spitting and the “schweinhund” concert. Probably, when they got home, they would strike a medal for themselves in honour of the visit. Wearing medals for sinking the *Lusitania*, and for playing hell generally, is the favourite German exercise.

I never spoke to one of our boys in the prison camps who did not hate the Hun women worse than the men. We heard there was a law in Germany against women wearing corsets, and Mallen said he thought that would start a revolution, because if any women ever needed corsets it was German women.

We had one bucket in each barracks, and as these buckets were used for both washing and drinking, they were always dirty. We boiled the water when we washed the clothes, to get rid of the cooties, and that left a settling in it that looked just like red lead. We had to get the water from a hydrant outside of the barracks, and for a while we drank it. But after several of the boys had gone West and we could not understand why, a man told us he thought the water was poisoned, and a Russian doctor, who was a prisoner, passed the word about it also. So, after that, very few of us drank water from the hydrant. I was scared stiff at first, because I had had some of the water, but after that I did not touch that brand.

It was a good thing for us that there was always plenty of snow, and even luckier that the Huns did not shoot us for eating it. It was about the only

thing they did not deprive us of—it was not “verboten.”

I thought I knew what tough cooties were, in the trenches, but these were regular mollycoddles compared with the pets we had in the prison camps. After we boiled our clothes we would be free from them for not more than two hours, and then they would come back, with reinforcements, thirsting for vengeance.

The men would sit in the barracks with their shirts off searching for the cooties, and they got to calling it “reading the news.” It looked just as though they were reading a newspaper. It is not a very nice thing to talk about, but you can imagine how we swarmed with lice when I tell you that we even had them on our shoestrings and in our eyebrows.

It is real labour “reading the news,” and I got sick of doing it, so I invented a way of getting rid of my little friends. It was bitterly cold at night, so I soaked my shirt in the water-bucket and then hung it on the barbed wire, thinking I could freeze them out. Next morning it was frozen stiff and hard as a rock, and I took it back in the barracks and dried it. It took a long time, and I did not see a single cootie. So I was all swelled up about it, and I told the other fellows I had done the trick at last, and the boys declared that they would have the barbed wire covered with shirts every night.

But when my shirt was dry and I had put it on, I found out that you cannot freeze them. And how they did go for me! I think they were hungrier than ever, because they had not had anything to nibble at all night, and the fresh air gave them an extra appetite. So no more shirts were hung out on the barbed wire.

The camp at Neustrelitz was surrounded by big dogs, which were kept just outside the barbed wire. We had them going all the time. Every now and then, some fellow would throw a stone at a dog and it would make an awful racket, and the next thing we knew was Fritz coming like a shot, with musket at his hip, just as they carry them in a charge, and blowing whistles at each other until they were blue in the face. Whenever they thought someone was escaping, they ran twice as fast as I ever saw them run, except when the Foreign Legion was on their heels at Dixmude.

When they got up to the dogs, they would first talk to them and then kick them, and after that they would rest their rifles on the wire and yell “Zurück!” at us. We all enjoyed this innocent pastime very much and were glad they had the dogs.

There were some things the Huns did that you could not explain. For instance, one of the Russians walked out of the canteen as we were passing, and we heard a bang! and the Russian dropped down and went West. Now, he had not done anything,

and the other Russians said he had behaved himself, worked hard and never been in trouble. They just killed him and that was all. But not one of us could discover why.

After we had been at Neustrelitz for three weeks they drove us out of the camp to a railway station, and stood us in the snow for four hours waiting for the train. We were exhausted, and began falling, one by one, and each time one of us fell the sentries would yell, "Nicht krank!" and give us the rifle butt. We had our choice of standing up and dying or falling down and being killed, and it was a fine choice to have to make.

The cars finally drew up, and as usual, the windows were smashed, the doors open, and the compartments just packed with snow. When we saw this we knew we were going to have even worse treatment, and many of us wanted to die. At Neustrelitz it had not been unusual for some of the men to tell the Germans to shoot them, but they never would when we wished them to, and it seemed as though it was always the man who wanted to live who did get it and went West.

But when they were pushing us into the cars one of the men had all he could stand, so he got out of the car they had just put him in, and began to dance round so that they could not help seeing him. A sentry yelled at him and started over to where he was jumping about, and the Limey yelled back, "Who

the hell do you think you are, you dirty German ——! ” and we thought he surely would get his.

But instead of plugging him the sentry took him by the arm and put him in his own compartment, and late that night gave him a cigarette stub. So, you see, when you want to die, they will not kill you.

However, all of us nearly got killed when we reached Wittenberg. When the train stopped there we saw a big wagon-load of sliced bread on the station platform and we all stared at it. We stood it as long as we could, and then we made a rush for it. But when we got nearer we saw that there were four sentries guarding it and four women issuing it out to the German soldiers. They would not give us any, of course.

So we stood round and watched the Huns eat it, while they and the women laughed at us, and pretended that they were starving, and would groan and rub their stomachs and say “Nichts zu essen ” to each other, and then grab a big hunk of bread and eat it. What we did not say to them was very little indeed. We were certainly wild if any men ever were.

Then some of us said we were going to get some of that bread, if we went West for it. So we started a fight, and while they were attending to some of us the others grabbed and hid all the bread they could. They drove us back into the cars, and we were just

starting to share the bread when they caught us with it and took it away. We were wilder than ever then, but we could not do anything.

It got colder after we left Wittenberg, and the snow blew into the cars through the windows and doors until we were afraid to sleep for fear of freezing. It was the worst night I have ever seen, and the coal bunkers on the *Yarrowdale* seemed like a palace compared with the compartments, because we could at least move about in the ship, while in the train we could not move at all, and were packed so closely that we could not even stretch our legs and arms. Some of the men did die, but not in my compartment, though most of us were frost-bitten about the face.

We thought that night would never end, but day came finally, and though it seemed to get colder and colder, we did not mind it so much. At about eleven that morning we arrived at a place called Minden and saw a prison camp there—just a stockade near the tracks with the boys out in the open. We waved to them and they waved back and gave a cheer-oh or two. We felt sorry for them, because we knew we were not going to that camp, and from what little we saw we knew we could not be going to a worse place than they were in. I shall never forget Minden, because it was here that I received the only cigarette I had while I was in Germany.

Minden is quite a railway centre, I guess, and



when we pulled into the depot we saw many troops going to the front or coming back. As at all important German railway stations, there was a Red Cross booth on the platform, with girls handing out barley coffee and other things to the Hun soldiers. I saw a large shanty on the platform with a Red Cross painted over the door. I saw the girls giving barley coffee to the soldiers, and I thought I would have a try at it and at least be polite enough to give the girls a chance of refusing me. I was refused all right, but they were so nasty about it that I lowered my head and uttered a few words. I do not remember just what they were, but they were not very complimentary, I guess. Anyhow, I did not think anyone near there understood English, but evidently someone heard me who did, for I got an awful boot that landed me ten or twelve feet away. I fell on my hands and knees, and about a yard away I saw a cigarette stub. I dived for it like a man falling on a football, and when I came up that stub was safely in my pocket. And it stayed there until I reached Dülmen and had a chance to light it behind the barracks. If any of the other men had smelled real tobacco they would probably have murdered me—and I could not have blamed them.

That was the first and the last cigarette I got in Germany, and you can believe me when I say that I enjoyed it. There was not much to it, but I smoked it until there was not enough left to hold in

my mouth, and then I used what was left and mixed it with the bark that we made cigarettes out of. Incidentally, this bark was great stuff. I do not know what kind of tree it came from, but it served the purpose. Whenever a fellow wanted to smoke and lit one of these cigarettes, a few puffs were enough. He did not want to smoke again for some time afterwards, nor, as like as not, did he want to eat either. They were therefore very valuable.

It is very hard to get matches in the camps, and when any prisoner does get hold of one it is made to last a long time. Here is how we made a match last. Someone gives up the sleeve of his coat, and the match is carefully lit, and the sleeve burned to a crisp. Then we take a button from our coats—the buttons are brass with two holes in them—pass a shoe string through the holes, knot the ends, and with the button in the centre of the string, buzz it around as you have seen boys do, with the string over both hands, moving the hands together and apart until the button revolves very fast.

We then put a piece of flint against the crisped cloth, and buzz the button against it until a spark makes the crisp glow, and from this we would light our bark cigarettes. I do not think any man in the world could inhale one of these bark cigarettes: some of us tried and went right to sleep.

## CHAPTER XXI

### A VISIT FROM MR. GERARD

WE arrived at Dülmen, in Westphalia, late at night. We were dragged out of the carriages, mustered on the platform, counted, then driven through the streets. In spite of the late hour, the streets were pretty well filled with people, and they zigzagged us through all the streets they could, so that the people would have a chance to see the crazy men, as they called us. Most of the crowd were women, and as soon as they saw us coming they began singing the "Watch on the Rhine," or some other German song, and it was funny to see windows opening and fat fraus, with nightcaps on, sticking their heads out. They would give us a quick glance, and then pipe up like a boatswain: "Schweinhund"—"Vaterland"—"Wacht am Rhein"—all kinds of things and all mixed up.

So we gave them "Tipperary" and "Pack up Your Troubles," and showed them how to sing. Our guards had no ear for music and tried to stop us, but though they knocked several men down, we did not stop until we had finished the song. Then, after we had admitted to each other that we were not down-hearted, we shut up.

We would have done so, anyway, because by this time we were on the outskirts of the town and needed all the breath we had. The road we were on was one long sheet of ice, and we could hardly walk more than four steps without slipping and falling. My shoes had wooden soles, and it was just one bang after another, with the ice and myself trying to see which could hit the hardest. Every time we fell—smash! came a rifle over the back.

I was getting pretty tired, so I said to some of the fellows that I was going to sit down and rest, and they said they would be damned if they did not do so also. So we dropped out and waited until the guards behind had about caught up with us, and then we went on again. We did this several times until they cottoned to the idea, and we could not do it any more.

Farther up the road I fell again, and this time I thought I did not care what happened, so I just sat there until Fritz came up. But instead of giving me the bayonet he made me take off my shoes—that is, he took them off with a knife through the strings—and I had to walk the rest of the way barefoot. It was about four miles altogether from the station to the camp.

When we got near the camp all the boys came out of the barracks and lined up along the barbed wire, and yelled us a welcome. We asked them if they were downhearted, and they said no, and we

said we were not either. We could hardly see them, but they began yelling again when we got nearer, and asked us, "Is there anyone there from Queens-town?" and then Hull, and Portsmouth, and Dover, and Toronto and a lot of other places.

I did not pay much attention until I heard, "Any Americans there?" and I yelled back, "Yes, where are you?"

"Barrack 6-B, Gruppe 3."

"Where from?" I yelled.

"Boston. Where're you from?"

"The U.S.A. and Atlantic ports. See you later."

So next morning I went over to his barracks and asked for the Yank. They pointed him out to me, where he was lying on the floor. I went over and lay down with him, and we had quite a talk. I will not give his name for certain reasons.

He had received several wounds at the time he was taken prisoner. He had been in the Canadian service for two years. We used to talk about New York and Boston and the different places we knew in both towns, and we also talked a lot about the rotten treatment we were receiving, and tried to cook up some plan of escape. But every one we could think of had been used by someone else, and either had failed, or the Huns had fixed it so the plan could not be tried again. We devised some pretty wild schemes at that. Altogether, we became great pals,

and were together as much as possible at Dülmen. The day I left the camp he gave me a ring made from a shell, and told me to get it safely back to the States, but someone stole it at Brandenburg.

One day while I was in his barracks an Englishman stepped out of the door for some reason or other, and though he did not say a word to Fritz, in two minutes he was dead, in cold blood. We never knew why they killed him.

At Swinemünde and Neustrelitz I must admit that the Germans had us pretty badly cornered, but at Dülmen the prisoners were entirely different. Dülmen was the receiving camp for the whole western front, and the prisoners there got to be pretty tough eggs, as far as Fritz was concerned, before they had been in camp many days. They thought nothing of picking a fight with a sentry and giving him a good battle, even though he was armed with rifle and bayonet. We soon learned that unless his pals are near a German will not stand by his arguments with his fists. In other words, if he can out-talk you he will not hesitate to do so, but if he cannot, it is a case of "Here comes Heinie going back."

The Russian prisoners at Dülmen were certainly a miserable-looking lot. They spent most of their time wandering round the Russian barracks, hunting for rotten potato peelings and other garbage, which they would eat. When they saw Fritz throw out

his swill they would dive right through the barbed wire one after another, and their hands and face and clothes were always torn. It was unhealthy to stand between the Russians and their garbage prey—they were so speedy that nothing stopped them.

One morning, just after barley-coffee time, I came out of the barracks and saw an Australian arguing with the sentry. I was not only curious, but anxious to be a good citizen, as they say, so I went up and lent them an ear. The Australian had asked Fritz what had been done with the flag that the Huns were going to fly from the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

That was too deep for Fritz, so the Australian answered it for himself. “Don’t you know, Fritz? Well, we have no blankets, you know.”

Still the sentry did not see it. So the Australian carefully explained to me—so that Fritz could hear—that the Germans had no blankets and were using the flag to wrap their cold feet in.

This started a fight, of course—the German idea of a fight, that is. The sentry, being a very brave man for a Hun, blew his whistle very loudly and sentries came from all directions. So we retreated to the Australian’s barracks, and there I found a second American in the camp. He was a barber named Stimson, from one of the western States. He had heard I was there as well as the Boston man in the Canadian service, but he had been too sick

to look us up, and, in fact, did not give a damn what happened, he was so miserable. He had been wounded several times, and died in a day or two. I never knew how he came to be in the Australian service.

Those two and myself were the only Americans I knew of in this prison camp—whether in Canadian, Australian, or French service. The other two had been captured in uniform, so there was no chance of their being released.

Dülmen was very near the Dutch border, and as it was quite easy to get out of the camp, attempts at escape were frequent. Most of those who ran away were brought back, though. The Germans were so lenient with those who tried to run away that I almost thought they were encouraging them. One chap was doing his ten days in the guard-house for the sixth time while I was there—that is, he had just about completed his period of detention. He claimed that the sixth time he had really got across the border; he swore it was the truth. I am not so sure myself. He got away for the seventh time while I was at Dülmen and was not returned.

Ten days in the guard-house is not such a light punishment, after all, because water three times a day is all the prisoner receives during that time, but it is pretty mild compared with some of the things the Huns do.

One morning I thought for sure I was going



queer. I was just fed up with the whole business, and sick of doing nothing but suffer. So I strolled along, sticking my head into barracks doors, here trying to have a talk and there trying to pick a fight. It was all one to me: I just wanted something to do. I found what I wanted all right.

I had quite a talk with a sentry in front of a barracks. It must have lasted three-quarters of an hour. He did not know what I was calling him, and I did not know what he was calling me. I could have handled him all right, but another sentry came up on my blind side and grabbed me, and the talk was over.

They dragged me to the commander of the camp and he instructed them to give me a bath. So they took me to the bath-house, where I was stripped and lashed. All the time they were whipping me I was thinking what a joke it was on me, because I had been looking for excitement and had got more than I wanted, so I laughed, and the Huns thought I was crazy, sure.

Now, the Germans have a kind of blue salve, of the order of soft soap. When you rub it on your face and take it off with a stick, it gives you as close a shave as any barber could. So they smeared it all over me, and I quit laughing. It felt like lye, where I had been lashed. I was dumped into a vat of hot water, and at the same time my clothes were given a boiling, which was good for them.

When I came out of that bath there was not a hair on my body except my head. I was just like a peeled onion, but far weaker. And how I did itch when the hair began to sprout again a few days later! It was a torture that lasted, I can tell you.

Then I was forced into my wet clothes and marched back to barracks. This bath and the stroll through the snow in wet clothes about did for me. Nowadays, when I sit in a draught for a second and catch cold, I wonder that I am still alive to catch it. Having gone through Dixmude, and the Dardanelles, and the sinking of the *Georgic*, and four German prison camps, and a few other things—I shall probably trip over a hole in a church carpet and break my neck. That would be my luck.

The Russians were very fond of this blue salve. As they did most of the cooking, and were near the bath-houses, they had a fine opportunity for stealing lots of it. What they used it for I do not know, but their barracks were full of it.

There were all the diseases you can think of in this camp, including black cholera and typhus, and somebody was always dying. We had to make coffins from any wood we could find. So it was not long before we were using the dividing boards from our bunks, pieces of flooring, and, in fact, the walls of the barracks. The officers were quartered in corrugated iron barracks, so they had to borrow wood from us for their coffins. We would make the

box and put the body in it, give it as much service as we could in the ways of prayers and hymns, and put it away in a hole near the barracks. Fatalities were so numerous that a single death passed unnoticed.

One morning the German sentries came to our barracks—they never came singly—and told us that an officer was going to review the prisoners, and ordered us to muster up, which we did. I was the last man out of the barracks, and on account of my wounds I was slower than the rest.

You understand, I had had no medical treatment except crêpe-paper bandages and water; my wounds had been opened by swimming from the *Georgic* to the *Moewe*, and they had been put in terrible shape in the coal bunkers. On account of the poor food and lack of treatment they had not even started to heal. Incidentally, the only cloth bandages that any of us had were what we would tear from our clothes, and I have seen men pick up an old dirty rag that someone else had had round his wound for a long time, and bandage his own wounds with it.

So it was all I could do to drag myself along. The officer noticed that I was out of line, and immediately asked my name and nationality. When he heard "American," he could not say enough things about us, and called me all the swine names he could think of.

I was pretty thin at this time and getting thinner, so I reasoned I might just as well have it out before I starved. Besides, I thought, he ought to know that, in the States, we are not used to being bawled at by German swine.

So I told him so. And I said that he should not decry Americans, because America was neutral. He then said that as America supplied food and munitions to the Allies she was no better than the rest.

Then I said: "Do you remember the *Deutschland*? When she entered Baltimore and New London she got all the cargo she wanted, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you send over your merchant marine they will get the same." For that answer he gave me ten days in the guard-house. He did not like to be reminded that their merchant marine had to dive under to keep away from the Limeys.

I admit I was pretty saucy to this officer, but who would not be when a raw German swine officer sneered at him?

The only fun I had in the camp was while I was in the guard-house. There were Belgians, Frenchmen, Russians, Montenegrins, Limeys, Australians, Turcos, and Canadians all talking at once and trying to make themselves understood. I could get on with the Britishers, the French, the Belgians and the Russians, but the Turcos and Montenegrins were beyond me. Some of the Britishers could talk a

little French, and many of the Russians could. And quite a few of the French and Belgians could talk English, and one or two knew a little Russian. But no one in the crowd, except myself, knew more than one language except his own, so our talks were always three- or four-cornered, and the last man to get the news generally had it all pretty mixed by the time it got to him.

It was while I was in the guard-house that Mr. Gerard, the American ambassador, visited the camp. He came to this camp about every six months, as a rule. Even in the German prison camps the men had somehow got information about Mr. Gerard's efforts to improve the terrible surroundings in which they lived. Some of the men at Dülmen had been confined in various other camps, and they told me that when Mr. Gerard visited these camps all that the men did for a week or so afterwards was to talk about his visit and what he had said to them. We knew Mr. Gerard had got the Germans to make conditions better in some of the worst hell-holes in Germany, and the men were always glad when he came. They felt they had something better to look forward to and some relief from the awful misery.

Mr. Gerard was passing through the French barracks, and a man I knew told him there was an American there. The Germans did not want him to see me, but he put up an argument with the commanding officer, and they finally said he could inter-

view me. I never was so glad to see anyone as I was to see him. The picture is still with me of his coming in the door. We talked for about an hour and a half, I guess, and then he got up to go, and he said I would hear from him in about three weeks. Just think what good news that was to me!

They let me out of the guard-house, and I celebrated by doing all the damage to German sentries that I could. The men in the camps went wild when they learned that Ambassador Gerard was there, for they said he was the only man in Germany they could tell their troubles to. The reason was that he was strong for the men, no matter of what nationality, and put his heart into the work. I am one of those who cannot say enough good things about him. Like many others, if it had not been for Mr. Gerard, I should have been done for by now.

A few days after this I was slow again as we were marching to the bread house, and the guard at the door tripped me. When I fell I hurt my wounds, which made me hot. Now, I had decided, on thinking it over, that the best thing to do was to be good, since I was expecting to be released, and I thought it would be tough luck to be killed just before I was set free. But I had been in the American navy, and any garby of the United States would have done what I did. It must be the training we get, for when a dirty trick is tried on us we get very nervous with our hands and are not always able to control them.

So I went for the sentry and walloped him in the jaw. Then I received his bayonet through the fleshy part of the forearm. Most bayonet wounds we got were in the arm. But those arms were in front of our faces at the time. The sentries did not aim for our arms, you can bet on that. A wound of the kind I received would be nothing more than a white streak if properly attended to, but I had absolutely no attention for it, and it was a long time in healing. Even so, I was lucky, for another bayonet stroke just grazed my stomach.

I had been at Dülmen for three weeks when we were transferred to Brandenburg, on the Havel, which is known to the prisoners as “The Hell Hole of Germany.” It certainly is not too strong a name for it, either.

On the way we changed trains at Osnabrück, and from the station platform I saw German soldiers fire with machine-guns on women and children who were rioting for food.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE HELL HOLE OF GERMANY

ON arriving at Brandenburg we were marched the three or four miles north-west to the camp. While we were tramping through the streets a woman walked alongside of us for quite a way, talking to the boys in English and asking them about the war. She said she did not believe anything the German papers printed. She said she was an Englishwoman from Liverpool and that, at the outbreak of the war, not being able to get out of Germany, she and her children had been put in prison, and that every day for over a week they had put her through the third degree; that her children had been separated from her and that she did not know where they were.

She walked along with us for some distance, until a sentry heard her say something not very complimentary to the Germans, and chased her away. When we arrived at the camp we were put into the receiving barracks and kept there six days. The condition of these barracks was such that you could not describe it. The floors were actually nothing but filth. Very few of the bunks remained: the rest had been torn down—for fuel, I suppose.



The day we were transferred to the regular prison barracks four hundred Russians and Belgians were buried. Most of them had died from cholera, typhoid, and inoculations. We heard from the prisoners there before us that the Germans had come through the camps with word that there was an epidemic of black typhus and cholera, and that the only thing for the men to do was to take the serum treatment to avoid catching these diseases. Most of the four hundred men had died from inoculation. They had taken the Germans' word, had been inoculated, and had died within nine hours. Which shows how foolish it is to believe a German. None of us had any doubt but that the serum was poisonous.

The second day that we were in the regular camp the Germans strung barbed wire all round our barracks. They told us we had a case of black typhus among us. This was nothing more nor less than bluff, for not one of us had typhus; but they put up the wire, nevertheless, and we were not allowed to go out.

One day when I was loafing about our barracks door, not having anything particularly important to do, I packed a nice hard snowball and landed it neatly behind the ear of a little sentry not far away. When he looked around he did not blow his whistle, but began hunting for the thrower. This was strange in a German sentry, and I thought he must be pretty good stuff. When he looked round, however, all he

saw was a man staggering as if he were drunk. The man was the one who had done the throwing all right, but the sentry could not be sure of it, for, surely, no man would stay out in the open and invite accidents like that. But still, who had done it?

So I just kept on staggering, and the sentry came up to me and looked me over pretty well. Then I thought for the first time that things might go hard on me, but I reckoned that if I quit the play-acting it would be all over. So I staggered right up to the sentry and looked at him drunkenly, expecting every moment to get one from the bayonet.

But he was so surprised that all he could do was to stare. So I stared back, pretending that I saw two of him, and otherwise acting foolish. Then, I guess, he realised for the first time that the chances of anybody's being drunk in that camp were small—at least, for the prisoners. He was rubbing his ear all the time, but finally the thought gradually reached his brain and he began to laugh. I laughed, too, and the first thing you know he had me doing it again, that is, in make-believe. One snowball was enough, I supposed.

I used to talk to him quite often after that. We had no particular love for each other, but he was gamer than the other sentries, and he did not call me “schweinhund” every time he saw me, so we got on very well together. His name must have been Schwartz, I guess, but it sounded like “Swatts” to

me, so Swatts he was, and I was "Chink" to him, as everybody else called me that.

One day he asked me whether I could speak French, and I said yes. Italian? Yes. Russian? Yes. No matter what language he might have mentioned, I would have said yes, because I could smell something in the wind, and I was curious. Then he told me that if I went to the hospital and worked there I might get better meals and would not have to go so far for them, and that my knowing all the languages I said I did would help me a great way towards getting the job.

Evidently he had been told to get a man for the place, because he appointed me to it then and there. He put me to work right away. We went over to one of the barracks, where a case of sickness had been reported, and found that the invalid was a Barbadoes negro named Jim, a fireman from the *Voltaire*. At one time Jim must have weighed 250 pounds, but by this time he was about two pounds lighter than a straw hat, but still black and full of pep. Light as he was, I was no "white hope," and it was all I could do to carry him to the hospital. Swatts kept right along behind me, and every time I would stop to rest he would poke me with a broom—the only broom I saw in Germany—and laugh and point to his ear.

Then I thought it was a put-up job and that he was getting even with me, but I was in for it by now,

and the best I could do was to go through with it. But I was all in when we reached the hospital. The first thing I saw when we got in the door was another negro, also from Barbadoes, and as tall and as thin as Jim had once been short and fat. This black boy and I made a great team, but I never knew what his name was. I always called him Kate, because night and day he was whistling the old song, "Kate, Kate, Meet Me at the Garden Gate," or words to that effect. I have waked up many a night and heard that whistle just about at the same place as when I had fallen asleep. It would not have been so bad if he had known all of it.

I took Swatts's broom and cleaned up, and then asked where the coal or wood was. This got a great laugh. It was quite humorous to the men who had shivered there for weeks, maybe, but to me it was about as funny as a cry for help. I got wood, though, before I had been there long.

There was a great big cupboard, that looked more like a small house, built against the wall of the hospital barracks in one corner of the room, and not far from the stove. Kate was the only patient able to be on his feet, so I thought he would have to be my chief cook and bottle-washer for a while ; and, besides, there was something about him that made him look pretty valuable. I had not recognised his whistling yet, so Slim looked to be the right name for him.

" Slim, what's that big cupboard for? "

“How’d I know? Nuthin’ in it.”

“Slim, that would make a fine box for coal or wood, wouldn’t it?”

“Um. Whar de coal an’ wood?”

“I’m going out to take observations, Slim. Take the wheel while I’m gone, and keep your eye peeled for U-boats.” So I sneaked out at the door and began looking round.

Next to us was a vacated Russian barracks. And it did not take me long to see it, too. Back I posted to the hospital and Slim.

“Slim, what barracks are next to us?”

“Russian burruks, only dey ain’t dere now. Been sick.”

“And you mean to tell me you don’t know where to get wood?”

“Sick men been in dem burruks.”

“Sick men here, aren’t there? Let’s go.”

That did the trick. The black boy used to watch from the hospital windows until he saw the coast was clear, then we would slip into the barracks next door, and he would watch again. When there was no sentry near enough to hear us, crash! and out would come a dividing board from the bunks. When we had an armful apiece, and had broken them up to the right lengths, all we needed was a little more watching, and then back to the hospital and the big cupboard. Later our men told me they used to watch the smoke that poured from the hospital chimney all

the time, and wonder where on earth we got the wood.

We got the same kind of food in the hospital that was served in the other barracks, and I would not have had any more than I used to except that occasionally some of the twenty-six patients could not eat their share, and then, of course, it was mine. One day, though, we all had extra rations.

Two Russian doctors came to visit us every day, and once they were foolish enough, or kind enough, to ask whether we had received our rations—we had received them earlier than usual and they were finished at the time. Of course, I said no, so they ordered the Russian in the kitchen to deliver twenty-eight rations to us, which was not quite three loaves of bread. We were that much ahead that day, but it would not work when I tried the trick again.

One day a German doctor came to the hospital barracks. He would not touch anything while he was there—not even open the door. All of the patients had little cards attached to their beds—charts of their condition. When the German wanted to see these charts the Russian doctors had to hold them for him.

I was having a great time at the hospital, wrecking the barracks next door each day for wood, along with Kate, and getting a little more food sometimes, and was always nice and warm. I thought myself quite a pet. Compared with what I had been up against, it seemed like real comfort. But the more

food I got, the more I wanted. And it was food that brought me down, after all.

Across from us was a barracks in which there were English officers, and somehow it seemed to me that they must have had a pull. Every now and then I saw what looked like vegetables, and bags of something that much resembled brown flour. So I told Slim, or Kate, as I was calling him by then, and with him on guard, I sneaked out. After two or three false starts I got over our barbed wire and their barbed wire, and in through a window.

There I saw carrots! And wholemeal flour!

I took all I could carry, to divide up with Kate, and then began eating, so as not to waste anything. It was certainly some feast—the only thing besides mud bread and barley coffee and “shadow” soup that I had to eat in Germany. Then I started back to the hospital. I got over that barbed wire all right, and Kate gave me the “all clear” for our entanglements, but just as I was going over them a sentry nabbed me. At first I thought Kate had turned traitor, because we had had a little argument a short time before when I got tired of his whistling. But I concluded he would not have done that, and, besides, he knew I was bringing him something to eat. So the sentry must have sneaked up without Kate’s seeing him. Who got the carrots and wholemeal flour I was carrying I do not know. The sentries kicked me all the way back to my old barracks.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### DESPAIR—AND FREEDOM

WHILE I was working at the hospital conditions at my old barracks had been getting worse and worse. Very few of the men were absolutely right in the head, I guess, and almost all had given up hope of ever getting out alive. Though they put up a good front to the Huns, they really did not care a great deal what happened to them. The only thing to think about was the minute they were living in.

The day I came back two Englishmen, who had suddenly gone mad, began to fight each other. It was the most terrible fight I have ever seen. It was some time before the rest of us could make them quit, because at first we did not know they were crazy. When we had them down, however, they were scratched and bitten and pounded from head to foot. Both bled from the nose all that night, and towards morning one of them became sane for a few minutes and then died. The other was taken away by the Germans, still crazy.

Another time an Australian came into our barracks, and with the utmost gravity told us that he was well in with the German officers and that he had



been to dinner with them, and had had turkey, potatoes, coffee, butter, eggs, sugar in his coffee, and all the luxuries you could think of. We just sat and stared at him. It seemed impossible that any of our own men would have the sauce to torture us like that, and yet we could not believe that it had really happened. Finally, one fellow could stand it no longer. He was nothing but skin and bone, but he grabbed a dividing board and there were just two wallops—the board hit the Australian's head and the head hit the floor. Then half a dozen more bounced on him and gave him a real licking. When he came to he forgot all about the wonderful dinner he did not have.

Not long after this the Russian doctors proved to the Germans that there was no black typhus in our barracks, and we were allowed the freedom of the camp, except that we could not visit the Russian barracks. That was no hardship to me, nor to the rest of us, except one chap from the *Cambrian Range*, who had a special pal among the Russians that he wanted to see. And of course, when it was forbidden, he wanted to see him all the more.

A day or two after the order I was standing outside the barracks door when I saw this fellow come out with a dividing board in his hand. I thought he was going to smash somebody with it, so I stood by. But he stooped over and jammed one end of the board against the threshold of the door, scratched

the ground with the farther end of the board, and measured again. He kept this up, length by length, in the direction of the Russian barracks. The sentry in the yard stopped and stared at him, but the fellow kept on, paying no attention to anybody. Pretty soon he was by the sentry's feet, and I thought any minute the latter would give him the butt, but he only stared a while and let him pass. That lad measured the whole distance to the Russian barracks, went inside, stayed a while, and calmly strolled out with the board under his arm. When he reached our barracks again he told us he had found a vino mine. What he really had found was something not so unusual—a thick-skulled German.

There was a lot of bamboo near the Russian barracks, and the Russians made baskets out of it and turned them in to the Germans. For this they got all the good jobs in the kitchen, and had a fine chance to get more to eat. But they were treated like dogs—that is, all except the few Cossacks that were among them. The Huns knew that a Cossack never forgets, and will get revenge for the slightest maltreatment, even if it means his death. I have seen sentries turn aside from the beat they were walking, and get out of the way when they saw a Cossack coming. There were very few Cossacks there, however. I do not think they let themselves get captured very often.

We had roll call every morning, of course, and

were always mustered in front of our barracks, the middle of the line being right at the barracks door. Sometimes, when the cold got too much for them, the men nearest the door would duck into the barracks. As they left the ranks the other men would close up and this kept the line even, with the centre still opposite the barracks door. Finally, almost all of the men would be in the barracks, and by the time the roll was over not one remained outside. This seemed to annoy the German officers a great deal, but they did not punish us for it until we had been doing it for some time.

For several days I had noticed that someone else answered for two men who had disappeared ; at least, I had not seen them for some time. I did not think much about it or ask any questions, and I did not hear anyone else talk about it, but I was pretty sure the two men, a Russian and a Britisher, had escaped. But they were marked present at roll call, and all accounted for. Everything went along very well until one day when the name "Fontaine" got by without being answered. Fontaine was a French fireman from the *Cambrian Range*, and that was the first time he had not been present. We saw what was coming, and we began to get pretty sore at Fontaine for not telling us, so we could answer for him and keep the escape covered.

The minute they found our count one short they blew the whistles, and a squad of sentries came up

as an extra guard. They counted us again, but by sneaking behind the line and closing up again we made the count all right except for one man—Fontaine. We would have tried to cover up for him, except that they had already discovered his absence. Now, we thought, they will nab Fontaine but will not discover the escape of the others.

But evidently they suspected something, for soon they brought over a petty officer from the *Nomad*, who had not been with us before, and forced him to call the roll from the mustering papers while they watched the men as they answered. Then they discovered that two more besides Fontaine were missing, and began to search for them.

The other two spoke German and had been missing for at least three days and, I think, had escaped by this time. They were not returned while I was at Brandenburg.

This was about 7 A.M. They marched us down to the little lake, where the cold was much greater, and kept us there until 5 P.M., without food or drink. At about 8 that morning they found Fontaine in a French barracks, and kicked him all the way to the lake where we were.

All day long we stood there, falling one by one and getting kicked or beaten each time, until we dragged ourselves up again. Two or three died—I do not know the exact number. But we had enough strength, when ordered back to the barracks, to kick

Fontaine ahead of us all the way. We did not get anything to eat until 7 the next morning—twenty-four hours without food and water, ten of which were spent in the snow without any protection from the cold and wind. No wonder we kicked Fontaine for bringing this punishment on us and endangering the two who had escaped—he had simply strolled over to the French barracks and forgotten to return.

Now, the food received was just about enough to keep us alive. I suppose, with true kultur, the Huns had calculated just how much it would take to keep a man on this side of the starvation line, and gave us that much and no more. So we were always famished—always hungrier than you probably ever have been. But sometimes when we were ravenously hungry and could not hold out longer, we would trade rations.

One man would trade his whole ration for the next day for a half ration to-day. That is, if you were so hungry that you thought you could not last out the day on your regular share, you would tell someone else that if he gave you half his share to-day you would give him all of yours to-morrow. If he was a gambler, he would take you up. That is, he would gamble on his being alive to-morrow, not on your keeping your word. He knew you would come across with your ration the next day, and like as not, if you tried to keep it from him he would kill you, and nobody would blame him.

It certainly was hard when the next day came to give up your whole ration and go without that day. But I never saw a man hedge, or even speak of it. And we did not have any food pirates among us either : we were not captains of industry by any means.

There were times when some of us could not eat certain of our rations. For instance, many and many a time I was as hungry as anybody could be, and I wanted to eat my mud bread, but it seemed as if I could not get it into my mouth. Then I would trade it with someone else for his "shadow" soup or his barley coffee.

Men were dying every day in Brandenburg, and after each death the senior men of that barracks would detail twelve of their number to go out for half an hour and dig the grave, while others made little crosses, on which they wrote or carved the man's name, when he was captured, and his regiment or ship. In the middle of the cross were always the letters, R.I.P.—"Rest in Peace."

One time we were ordered to report to the German doctors for a serum treatment of some kind—to receive an injection, in other words. There was no choice about it this time, as we were simply herded together to the hospital barracks. Now, I knew what these things were like, and how brutal the German doctors were in giving an injection, so I wanted to be the very first man and not have to witness the other men getting theirs.

So I pushed up to the head of the line, with the crew of the *Nomad*, and by the time we got to the hospital was the very first man in line. But the sentry threw me back, and there were several men ahead of me.

Each of them bared his chest, and the doctors slashed them across the breast with a very thin knife, so you can see that it was very painful. When it came to my turn they slashed me three times in the shape of a triangle just to one side of the breast. And that was all there was to it: no injection, nothing on the knife that I could see. But it hurt like hell.

Now, I do not know what the idea was. Every man of us was dizzy for the rest of the day, and could not do anything but lie about the barracks. And hardly any of us bled a drop, though the gashes were deep. I do not think we had any blood in us to run, and that is the truth of it. It was just another German trick that no one could explain.

When my three weeks were up and I had not heard from Mr. Gerard, I was just about ready to go down to the lake and pick out a vacant spot and lie down in it. I really do not think I could have lasted two weeks longer. And just about that time, as I was walking back to barracks one day, a Frenchman showed me a German newspaper, and there, in large type, on the top of the first page, it said that Mr. Gerard had left the country, or was getting

ready to leave.\* They had to drag me the rest of the way to the barracks, and throw snow on me before I came to.

I do not know what happened during the next few days.

But a week or so later the Spanish ambassador and four German officers and Swatts came to our barracks, and the ambassador told me I would be released! It was all I could do to keep from fainting again. Then Swatts asked me in English if I had anything to say about the treatment in the camp, and I began to think maybe it was a plant of some kind, so all I said was, "When will I get out of here?" and he said, "Why, you will be released to-morrow."

I did not wait to hear any more, but rushed into the barracks again, singing and whistling and yelling as loud as I could. The boys told me my face was very red, and I guess what little blood I had in my body had rushed to my head, because I could hardly walk for a few minutes.

Then the men began to think I was crazy, and none of them believed I would really be released,

\* Gunner Depew's interview with Mr. Gerard took place at the Dülmen prison camp on or about February 1, 1917. On February 3 the State Department demanded the release of sixty-two Americans captured on British vessels and held as prisoners in Germany. On the same day President Wilson severed diplomatic relations with Germany. Ambassador Gerard left Germany exactly one week later. The newspaper that Gunner Depew saw must have been issued after February 10. It was not until March 9, 1917, however, that Gunner Depew was actually released from Brandenburg.—EDITOR'S NOTE.



but that I was going to be sent to the mines, as so many were. But I believed it, and I just sat there on my bunk and began to dream of the food I would get and what I would eat first, and so on.

I did not go to sleep that night—just walked from barracks to barracks until they chased me away, and then walked up and down in my own barracks the rest of the night. When I got to the Russian barracks and told the two doctors my news, they would not believe me at all, although they knew there had been some important visitor at the camp.

But when I walked out of their door I said, “Dobra vetshav,” which means “Good night!” Then they must have believed me, for they called me back, and all the men gave me addresses of people I should write to, in case I should get away.

They were all talking at once, and one of the doctors got very excited and got down on his knees with his hands in the air. “Albert,” he said, “if you have the God-given luck to get out of Germany—not for my sake, but for the sake of us who are here in this hell hole, promise me you will tell all the people wherever you go what they are doing to us here. Tell them not to send money, for we can’t eat money, and not meat—just bread, bread, bread——”

And when I looked round all the men were sitting on their beds, crying and tearing their hair and saying, “bread, bread, bread,” over and over again.

Then each tried to give me something, as if to say that even if they did not get out, perhaps their button, or belt, or skull-cap, would get back to civilisation.

When I left their barracks I began to cry because it did not seem possible that I was going away, and already I could see them starving slowly, just as I had been starving.

Next morning a sentry came to my barracks, called out my name and took me to the commander of the camp. They searched me and then ordered me back to barracks again. Then the men all thought they were just playing a joke on me, and they said so.

The same thing happened next day, and when one of the men said that probably I would be put up against a wall and shot I began to feel shaky, I can tell you.

But the third morning, after they had searched me, the commander said, "Well, you'll have to have a bath before you leave the country," and I was so glad that I did not mind about the bath, although I remembered the last one I had, and it did not agree very well with me. After the bath they escorted me out into the road.

There were four sentries with me, but not Swatts, nor did I see him anywhere, for which I was sorry. But all the boys came down to the barbed wire, or to the gate, and some were crying, and others were

cheering, and all were very much excited. But after a minute or two they got together again and the last thing I heard was the song about packing up your old kit bag, and then, "Are we downhearted?—No!" They were certainly game lads.

They did not take me straight to the station, but led me through all the streets they could find, and, as usual, the women were there with the bricks and spit. But I did not mind: I was used to it, and, besides, it was the last time. So I just grinned at them and thought that I was better off than they, because they had to stay in the hole called Germany.

I was still half naked, but I did not mind the two-hours' wait on the station platform. I noticed a little sign that read, "Berlin 25 miles north," and that was the first time I had much of an idea where Brandenburg was.

When we got into the compartment and I found that the windows were not smashed, I could not believe it at first, until I remembered that this was not a prisoner-train. We had a forty-eight hours' ride to Lindau, which is on the Lake of Constance, and no food or water in that time. But still I did not mind it much. At Lindau they conveyed me into a little house and took away all the addresses that I had, and then marched me over to the boat which crosses the lake.

As I started up the gangway the last thing I re-

ceived in Germany reached me—a crack across the back with a rifle!

The women and children on the dock had their fists up and were yelling, “American swine!” But I just laughed at them. And when I looked round the boat and saw no German soldiers—only Swiss civilians—I rubbed my eyes and could not believe it. When they gave me bread, which was what I had decided I wanted most of all when I was in the camp, I thought I was in heaven sure enough; and when, forty-five minutes later, we arrived at Rorschach in Switzerland, I knew I was free.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### BACK IN THE STATES

AFTER I arrived at Rorschach I was taken to a large hall where I remained over night. There were three American flags on the walls, the first I had seen for a long time. I certainly did a fine job of sleeping that night. I think I slept twice as fast to make up for lost time.

In the morning I had a regular banquet for a breakfast—eggs, coffee, bread and a small glass of wine. Even now that breakfast is still easy to taste, and I sometimes wish I could enjoy another meal as much. But I guess I never shall have one that will go as good.

After breakfast they took me out on the steps of the hall and photographed me, and presently I went to the railway station, with a young mob at my heels. It reminded me a bit of Germany—but it was so different. Instead of bricks and bayonet jabs, the mob gave me cigarettes and chocolate and sandwiches. They also handed me questions—enough to keep me busy answering to this day if I could.

I travelled by train to Zürich, and at every station there were more presents and more cameras

and more questions. At St. Gall they had cards ready for me to write on, and then they were going to send them to anybody I wished. The station at Zürich was packed with people, and I began to think I was a star for sure.

Francis B. Keene, the American consul-general at Zürich, and his assistant, were there to meet me. We walked to his office and, all the way, the cameras were clicking and the chocolates and cigarettes piling up until I felt like Santa Claus on December 24th. After a little talk with Mr. Keene, he took me to the Stussehof Hotel, where my wounds were dressed—and, believe me, they needed it.

Certainly the Swiss treated me well. Every time I came out on the streets they followed me and used to give me money. But the money might just as well have been leather or lead—I could not spend it. Whenever I wanted to buy anything the shopkeeper would make me a present of it.

I also visited the Hôtel Baur au Lac, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harold McCormick, of Chicago, who were doing such fine work with the Red Cross and in looking after the Belgian and French refugees in Switzerland. It was a dinner much appreciated by one guest, at least. I need not mention his name, but he ate so much that he felt ashamed afterwards.

I do not think he got into trouble for it, though, for Mr. and Mrs. McCormick afterwards each gave him a valuable present, which he needed badly. After

the dinner Mrs. McCormick made a little patriotic speech, in which she said that the Huns would never trample on the United States flag, and some other things that made all the Americans present very proud, especially Mr. Keene and myself. So you can see I was having a great time.

Yet the crowd I drew was nothing to the mob that followed a big negro about. I do not know who he was, and when we talked I could not understand him, but beyond question he was the centre of attraction, the observed of all observers. Wherever I saw a big crowd of people I knew he was in the middle of it, he was sure to have both hands loaded with presents. I supposed that negroes were scarce in Switzerland. What a treat it would be for a Swiss to visit the "black belt" down South!

Nevertheless, I was having a little trouble all the time for this reason: there was quite a number of Germans interned in Zürich, and they went about in uniform. Now, when I saw one of these birds and remembered what had been happening to me only a short time before, my hands began to itch. Believe me, it was not "Good morning" that I said to them. I enjoyed it all right; they were not in squads and had no arms, so it was hand to hand, and pie for me.

However, Mr. Keene did not like it, I guess, for he called me to his office one morning and talked to me seriously for a while, and I promised to be good. "You're supposed to be neutral," he said. And I

said, "Yes, and when I was torpedoed and taken prisoner I was supposed to be neutral, too." But I said I would not look for trouble any more, and I started back to the hotel.

Well, no sooner was I under way than a Hun private came along and began to laugh at me. My hands itched again, and I could not help but hit out a few. We went round and round for a while, and then the Hun reversed and went down instead. Mr. Keene saw us, or heard about it, so he told me I had better go to Berne.

So off I went with my passport. But the same thing happened in Berne. I tried very hard, but I just could not keep my hands off the Germans. So I guess everybody thought it was a good thing to bid me good-bye. Anyway, I was shipped to France, going direct to St. Nazaire and from there to Brest.

I made a short trip to Hull, in Yorkshire, with a letter from a man at Brandenburg to his wife. She was not at home, but I left the letter and returned to France. I was in France altogether about three weeks, and then went to Barcelona, in Spain.

There I met Jack Johnson, the negro prize-fighter, and attended a bull-fight with him. He was in the insurance business in Spain, but did not seem to be very popular. About the first thing he asked me was, "How's Chicago?" and as I had never been there I could not give him very much news. I did not advise him to return to the States.



At last I took passage for the States on the *C. Lopez y Lopez*, a Spanish merchantman. We had mostly "Spigs" on board, which is navy slang for Spaniards. Almost every one of them had a large family of children and a raft of pets. We sailed by Valencia, Almeria, Malaga, Cadiz, and Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. When we left Las Palmas we had a regular menagerie aboard—parrots, canaries, dogs, monkeys and various beasts. The steerage of that boat was some sight, believe me.

We had boat drill all the way across, of course, and from the way those Spigs rushed about I knew that if a submarine got us, the only thing that would be saved would be monkeys. But we did not even have a false alarm all the way over.

I arrived in New York during the month of July, 1917—two years and a half from the time I decided to go abroad to the War Zone to get some excitement. I got it, and no mistake. New York harbour and the old Statue of Liberty looked mighty good to me, you can bet.

So here I am, and sometimes I have to pinch myself to be sure of it. I certainly enjoy the food and warmth I get here, and, except for an occasional pro-German, I have no trouble with anybody. My wounds break open now and again, and I am often bothered inside on account of the gas I swallowed. They say I cannot get back into the service. It is

rough luck to be knocked out before our own boys get into the scrap.

But I do not know. I am twenty-three years old and probably have a lot to live yet. I guess I ought to settle down and be quiet for a while, but comfortable as I am, I think I will have to go to sea again. I think of it many times, and each time it is harder to stay ashore.



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